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Daily Report
Near East & South Asia

FBIS-NES-96-109 *5 June 1996*

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Inter-Arab Affairs

Inter-Arab: Al-'Aqabah Tripartite Summit Begins 5 Jun

JN0506093496 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 0900 GMT 5 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The tripartite summit with Egyptian President Muhammad Husni Mubarak and Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat, and hosted by His Majesty King Husayn, began in al-'Aqabah before noon today.

The three leaders will discuss ways of supporting the peace process; the resumption of negotiations on the other Arab tracks, especially the Palestinian track; and support for the Palestinian brothers in the final status negotiations.

His Majesty King Husayn received Presidents Mubarak and 'Arafat upon their arrival at al-'Aqabah Port. They were also received by His Highness Crown Prince Hasan, Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti, Royal Court Chief 'Awn al-Khasawinah, and ranking officials.

His Majesty King Husayn, President Mubarak, and President 'Arafat will hold a news conference this afternoon to talk about the results of the summit and to answer journalists' questions. Radio Jordan will relay the news conference live.

Inter-Arab: Al-Mu'ashshir on al-'Aqabah Summit, Riyadh Meeting

JN0406204896 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 4 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Council of Ministers held a session today under the chairmanship of Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti. Following the session, Information Minister Dr. Marwan al-Mu'ashshir told journalists the following:

[Begin recording] [al-Mu'ashshir] During today's session, the Council of Ministers finished its discussion of the Jordan Press Association law. As you know, the dialogue with the Association is continuing, and we will review its proposals before the final endorsement of the law. The Council of Ministers will now refer the law to the House of Representatives.

[Unidentified correspondent] The prime minister received a telephone call from the Saudi foreign minister prior to the tripartite summit scheduled for tomorrow, and after the tripartite coordination meeting [in Riyadh] What is going on?

[Al-Mu'ashshir] The phone call is part of the regular coordination between Saudi Arabia and Jordan. The Saudi foreign minister expressed Saudi Arabia's confidence in Jordan's support for the Palestinian brothers in particular and the peace process in general. The phone call also dealt with tomorrow's meeting, as well as ways to support the Palestinian brothers during the upcoming final-status negotiations and to resume the peace process on the other Arab tracks. We believe consultation will continue and relations will be enhanced. During the phone call, they also agreed that the Saudi trade minister will come to Jordan on 11 June so that the 12th ministerial committee meeting can be held to take a qualitative step in Jordanian-Saudi relations. We hope that relations will return to their pre-Gulf crisis normalcy.

We do not view any Arab move as against other moves. We do not believe in the axes policy. As you know, Egypt, which will participate in tomorrow's summit, held contacts with Saudi Arabia and Syria, and we also held contacts with Saudi Arabia. So, these moves should not be viewed as opposed to other moves. On the contrary, these moves will boost joint Arab action, if no large-scale Arab summit can be held for the time being. These limited moves, however, are aimed at enhancing joint Arab action and coordinating efforts. [end recording]

Inter-Arab: Mubarak, 'Arafat Attend Tripartite Summit

NC0506092396 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0820 GMT 5 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 5 Jun (MENA)—President Husni Mubarak left Cairo this morning for al-'Aqabah, accompanied by Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat, to attend the tripartite summit which will be held later today with the participation of Jordanian Monarch King Husayn.

The delegation accompanying President Mubarak includes Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa, Electricity Minister Engineer Mahir 'Abazah, Education Minister Dr. Husayn Kamil Baha'-al-Din, Chief of the Presidential Office Dr. Zakariya 'Azmi, and Dr. Usamah al-Baz, first Foreign Ministry under secretary and director of the President's Office for Political Affairs.

Inter-Arab: Arab League Chief Comments on Events in Bahrain

NC0406184596 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1745 GMT 4 June 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo 4 June (MENA)—Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd al-Majid has emphasized that the terrorist plan to undermine security and stability in Bahrain runs counter to international law and the principles of good neighborliness.

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In a statement today, 'Abd al-Majid reiterated the Arab League's solidarity with the fraternal State of Bahrain and endorsed all the measures it is taking to safeguard its security and stability.

The Arab League secretary general stressed the need to avoid doing anything that might undermine security and stability in the Gulf region, emphasizing that such actions would create unnecessary tensions in the region.

Inter-Arab: 'Abd-al-Majid Calls on Iran To Stop Interfering in Bahrain

NC0406192596 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1900 GMT 4 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 4 Jun (MENA)—Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid has expressed his hope that Iran will deal with neighboring Arab states from a position of friendship rather than defiance.

The secretary general was responding to a question on the uncovering of an Iranian-backed terrorist organization. He said: Iran should put an end to its interference, whether in Bahrain or the United Arab Emirates.

Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid called on Iran to respect the ties of good neighborliness with Arab states.

Inter-Arab: Arab League Seeks To Mediate Kuwait-Libya Dispute

NC0406150596 Paris AFP in English 1405 GMT 4 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, June 4 (AFP) — The Arab League has launched "discreet" contacts to ease tensions between Kuwait and Libya after Libyan leader Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi questioned the emirate's right to independence, a League official said Tuesday [4 June].

League Secretary General Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid intervened after receiving an official protest from Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad at al-Qadhdhafi's remarks, said the official who asked not to be named.

Al-Sabah also asked 'Abd-al-Majid to "contact the Libyans to clarify their true attitude towards Kuwait," the official said, adding the League head was involved in "high-level" contacts.

Al-Qadhdhafi said during a speech last week at Cairo University: "Kuwait should never have gained independence if it is not even capable of defending itself," referring to Iraq's 1990 invasion of the Gulf emirate.

The remarks struck a nerve in Kuwait, which recalled its charge d'affaires in Tripoli and threatened to cut off diplomatic ties with Libya.

'Abd-al-Majid, quoted by the Egyptian press during a visit to Budapest, said he had been "shocked" by al-Qadhdhafi's statements.

Inter-Arab: Saudi, Egyptian, Syrian Foreign Ministers Meet in Riyadh

LD0406134896 Riyadh Saudi Arabian Kingdom Radio Network in Arabic 1130 GMT 4 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] A joint meeting, attended by His Royal Highness Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal, foreign minister; His Excellency Mr. 'Amr Musa, foreign minister of Egypt; and His Excellency Mr. Faruq al-Shar', foreign minister of Syria, was held at the Foreign Ministry in Riyadh today. After the meeting, His Royal Highness Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal told SPA that the meeting was held at the behest of the leaders of the three countries with a view to making a joint assessment of the latest developments in the Middle East and putting forward specific recommendations on the stance the Arabs should adopt to face up to these developments.

Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal added that a report has been prepared and will be submitted to the leaders of the three countries. [passage omitted]

Palestinian Affairs

Palestinian Affairs: Further on 'Arafat Oxford Speech

JN0506092896 Gaza Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation Television Network in Arabic 1832 GMT 4 Jun 96

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Translated Text] On 3 June at 2230 Palestine time [1930 GMT] CNN, the international U.S. television network, relayed live to the world a speech delivered by President Yasir 'Arafat to the Oxford University Union in Great Britain. Palestinian television also broadcast this speech to its viewers in a live relay from London. However, due to the bad audio quality from the source, CNN had to interrupt its live transmission and resume its normal programming. This prevented us from monitoring the whole speech.

In view of the importance of President 'Arafat's speech, as demonstrated by the fact that CNN relayed it live to the whole world, and because Palestinian television was unable to carry all of it because of the bad audio quality at the source in Oxford, we will try our best

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to summarize President Yasir 'Arafat's speech to the Oxford University Union. This will be followed by a full recording of the president's meeting with the Debate Society in Oxford University, which was also relayed live by CNN late last night.

During his meeting with the Oxford University Union, President Yasir 'Arafat urged Britain to assist us in a way that will secure the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and to establish their independent state, whose capital is holy Jerusalem.

The president urged the British Government to help and do justice to our Palestinian people, who faced the ugliest form of injustice in history and paid for the mistakes of others. The president added: We look forward to the next European summit to protect the peace of the brave in the Middle East.

The president praised the statement made by British Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind on 23 May in which he stressed that Britain supports the establishment of a Palestinian state and warned Israel against imposing a solution that is unacceptable to the Palestinian people and against obstructing the establishment of a Palestinian state.

The president reiterated his commitment to the peace process, saying: Peace is a top objective and priority for us. It is the only hope for our people, the Israeli people, and all people to gain independence, freedom, security, welfare, and prosperity.

His excellency added: Jerusalem is the jewel of our country and our immortal, sacred pearl. Peace in the region cannot be established without Palestinian peace and without realizing the Palestinian people's national rights. He stressed that peace and security are two inseparable principles. Comprehensive peace and the regaining of territory are also two inseparable principles, he added.

The president said: We have to wait and see how the new Israeli prime minister and his bloc will act toward the peace process and Oslo agreements. We must continue the final-phase negotiations, which will focus on Jerusalem, the settlements, the refugees, the demarcation of borders between the Israeli and Palestinian states, relations with our neighbors, and mutual security.

He stressed the need to resolve the issues that are still outstanding in the transitional phase, such as the crossings, the safe corridor, and others. He called on the Israelis to continue the peace process and to enter into the final-phase negotiations with an unshakable determination to achieve full peace, which cannot be separated from complete withdrawal.

'Arafat said: My presence here at Oxford University reminds me of the pioneering role of universities in shaping people's views and the strategies of states and their plans for the future. Large numbers of our intellectuals and our cultural and economic leaders studied in British universities—here in Oxford, as well as in other important universities all over the world.

These intellectuals, men of letters, artists, scientists, economists, and technicians represented a special force for the militant Palestinian people that has been unparalleled among many oppressed people who are deprived of their natural rights. We chose the book instead of the loaf of bread. Eighteen out of 1,000 Palestinian students hold advanced degrees; in Israel the figure is 14 out of 1,000.

President 'Arafat said: I am lucky: The Palestinian people have offered the greatest sacrifices for their right to self-determination, independence, a return to their land, and just peace.

The president said: Peace is a contract between two parties, and peace cannot be withdrawn unilaterally. In our case, it is a contract that was signed by an elected Israeli Government and was approved by the Israeli people through their legitimate representatives in the Knesset. Our people approved it the same way.

President 'Arafat said: The only dimension in my life—in the past, in the present, or in the future—deals with a dream, hope, and the homeland. There is only this homeland, and this holy land which God has blessed.

The president added: Unfortunately, the Israeli Government made us bear the heavy burdens that resulted from attempts by extremists on both sides to blow up the bridges we had built to allow safe passage of the train of peace. The Israeli Government imposed a security cordon, a closure, and a complete siege and stopped work and workers as well as export and import operations. Our losses have reached more than $6 million a day. This is catastrophic for a people who are completely rebuilding their infrastructure, destroyed by the Israeli occupation. The peace of the brave we signed will not last without sacrifices, but these sacrifices are needed from both Palestinians and Israelis—not just from Palestinians.

My commitment to the cause of peace will benefit not only Palestinians but also the Israelis. It will give them the security they want and also serve the region and the world at large. This commitment prompts me tell you how bitter I am in regard to the obstacles to peace that have been raised under the pretext of security. These obstacles are fertile soil for extremism on both sides. What will bring security and peace is the complete and

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comprehensive Israeli withdrawal from all Palestinian and Arab territory; and the return to the 4 June 1967 borders in accordance with what we started from and on the basis of the Madrid peace conference: land for peace and in accordance with international legitimacy resolutions.

The claim that Israel can bring about peace without this complete withdrawal from Palestinian and Arab territory and without recognizing the Palestinians' right to repatriation, self-determination, and the establishment of an independent state with Jerusalem as its capital is an illusion and a figment of a chauvinistic imagination. The siege imposed on the Palestinian people should be lifted, and the isolation of Jerusalem must end. The practice of preventing Christians and Muslims from reaching their holy shrines should stop. Crossings between the Palestinian territory and Egypt and Jordan should be opened, and attempts to close Bethlehem should cease. Arab Jerusalem is an occupied Palestinian territory to which Resolution 242 applies. This resolution calls for withdrawal of the Israeli forces, and it also applies to the other Palestinian and Arab territories. The fate of Jerusalem must be decided in negotiations in accordance with agreements signed between the parties and in line with the international legitimacy resolutions and what we agreed upon at the Madrid peace conference.

In conclusion, President Yasir 'Arafat said: President of the Oxford University Union, ladies and gentlemen, students, and guests: I traveled the long distance from my homeland of Palestine to Great Britain for the sake of peace, for a better future, and for the sake of a hope, a dream, and a future for our children and their children so that they can live as equals in peace and security.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Asfur Calls For Direct Dialogue Between 'Arafat, Netanyahu

TA0506083296 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0800 GMT 5 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Hasan 'Asfur, head of the Palestinian negotiating team, has said that Binyamin Netanyahu must speak directly to Yasir 'Arafat. 'Asfur maintained that the message Netanyahu sent to Abu-Mazin [Mahmud 'Abbas] through his political adviser Dore Gold was not enough. 'Asfur asserted that this message had not reassured the Palestinian Authority [PA] or indicated a desire to continue the peace process. In 'Asfur's opinion, if Israel seeks to allay the Palestinians' fears, it must continue official contacts. This was reported by our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem.

PA official Yasir 'Abd-Rabbuh said that the summit meetings between Arab leaders in al-'Aqabah and Riyad reflected the Arab world's desire to receive assurances that the peace process will continue. 'Abd-Rabbuh was speaking to our correspondent Arye Gus in al-'Aqabah.

Palestinian Affairs: PA Official Warns of Return to Intifadah

TA0406162596 Ramallah AL-AYYAM in Arabic 3 Jun 96 p 3

[Interview with Hasan 'Asfur, director general of the Negotiations Department, by 'Abd-al-Ra'uf Arna'ut; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Arna'ut] How will a change in the Israeli negotiating team affect the peace process?

['Asfur] First of all I would like to stress that the previous negotiating process was conducted between the Palestinian and Israeli sides, between the PLO and the Israeli Government. This is in keeping with the agreement signed between the two parties.

Personal relations sometimes contributed to the climate of understanding and sometimes had no effect. Those relations, however, did not have an impact on the substance of negotiations.

A change in the Israeli negotiating team might not be fundamental. Some people might remain in their posts, but the leading figures could change. As far as the substance of negotiations is concerned, we are negotiating with individuals.

Finally, the change in the negotiating team's makeup might not be a negative factor in the negotiating process.

[Arna'ut] But many of the issues on which you negotiated with Uri Savir, for example, have not been finalized. Do you believe that his replacement from the Likud Party will accept what Savir accomplished?

['Asfur] There are many outstanding issues which have not been settled yet, but as we said on the first day of the announcement of Netanyahu's victory, what is needed is a seriousness in implementing the signed agreements and a seriousness by the new government to continue the peace process.

Therefore, if the new Israeli Government wishes to prove that it is serious in continuing the peace process and wants to establish its stature in the world, it must implement the former agreement between Israel and the PLO and continue negotiating on the final status issues.

It will not be so simple for this government to say that it will implement the agreements and then adhere to its ominous electoral program. We neither deal nor negotiate with an electoral program. We deal with the signed agreements. Just as we have honored all our

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commitments, they must honor their commitments. Otherwise, there will be procrastination and foot-dragging, for which the region will pay a heavy price.

The loser will not just be the Palestinian side. Israel will not be spared from this loss, and all that it entails. Therefore, we hope and expect that Netanyahu's government will respect those commitments and not drag its feet.

[Arna'ut] Why did you not open channels of communication with the Likud Party before?

['Asfur] We do not search for channels of communication with forces who have an absolutely hostile, opposing, and unfriendly stance toward the Palestinian people.

For their part, they tried to open channels of communication with the Palestinian Authority [PA]. A few months ago, a prominent Likud Central Committee member met with President Yasir 'Arafat. This was the only serious meeting with the Likud Party.

For our part, we did not initiate the opening of channels of communication with the Likud because of their hostile positions and because we prefer to communicate with the legitimate and elected Israeli Government.

If the Likud Party had wanted to hold serious contacts, the PA would not have objected as long as this party wished to deal with us, but we do not impose ourselves on anyone.

[Arna'ut] How will you feel when you sit opposite a stubborn Likud negotiator holding hostile positions?

['Asfur] When we sat with the Labor negotiators, their stances were hostile as well. This Labor government did not become the friend of the Palestinian people even after the negotiations.

[Arna'ut] But the Likud Party wants to return the talks to square one?

['Asfur] A return to square one will mean a return to the climate of war, intifadah, and resistance. A resumption of settlement activity will mean turning backward, and this will only mean conflict.

If their choice is conflict, we will not remain onlookers and sit idle. We are not so weak that someone can imagine that he can impose his policies on us. This is merely a legacy of the past.

[Arna'ut] Will you accept the Jerusalem issue being deleted from the final talks agenda?

['Asfur] If Netanyahu deletes any issue from the negotiations agenda, he will have to cancel the entire negotiations. If this is his aim, then he should declare it clearly. If, however, he is seeking peace, he must not delete any item from the agenda. I believe that he is not so politically naive.

Palestinian Affairs: Hamas Spokesman Warns Netanyahu Against Violent Measures

TA0406152196 Ramallah AL-AYYAM in Arabic 3 Jun 96 p 5

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Gaza, AL-AYYAM — Dr. Mahmud al-Zahhar, the official spokesman for Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement], has said that Netanyahu's victory proves the Israeli Jewish population's rejection of the previous government's policy and the fact that the Israelis are not serious about peace.

In a statement to AL-AYYAM, al-Zahhar said that Shim'on Peres was not interested in peace. Hence, he pursued the policy of stages and geographic division and did not honor the commitments signed with the Palestinian side.

Al-Zahhar said he believes that Israel will turn from a Zionist state into a theocratic state in the upcoming elections or the ones after it. This is based on the fact that the religious people have won a large number of seats in the current elections.

Al-Zahhar said that the new government resorting to violent measures against the Palestinian people will produce counterviolence and lead the region into a cycle of violence.

Al-Zahhar added that his appeal before the Israeli elections to halt military action against Israel during the election campaign has been proved right.

He concluded his statement by calling on all Palestinian parties and forces to conduct a comprehensive national dialogue to examine the situation stemming from the recent Israeli elections. [passage omitted]

Palestinian Affairs: Hamas Calls For Probe Into Torture in Palestinian Jails

NC0406135096 Paris AFP in English 1350 GMT 4 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Jerusalem, June 4 (AFP) — The Palestinian militant group Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] Tuesday [4 June] urged international human rights officials to investigate alleged atrocities committed against their militants detained in Palestinian jails.

"Reports from Palestinian prisons confirm that detainees are facing brutal torture to force them to confess or change their political beliefs," the Hamas said in a statement sent to AFP here.

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It called on rights organisations to visit prisoners held in the autonomous territories "to note their situation and to witness the violation of their political rights."

Hamas said as many as 500 political prisoners were being held by the Palestinian Authority in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

The Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) is fiercely opposed to the autonomy accord struck between Palestinian leader Yasir 'Arafat and Israel and has tried to derail the peace process by carrying out several deadly anti-Israeli attacks.

Following a wave of suicide bombings in Israel in late February and early March in which 58 people were killed, Israel stepped up pressure on the Palestinian Authority to crack down on militants suspected of involvement in the terror campaign.

Several hundred Palestinians have since been arrested by Palestinian police, while hundreds more have been detained in West Bank areas still under Israeli control.

Palestinian Affairs: INSP Leader Calls For End to Armed Operations

TA0406153996 Gaza AL-HAYAH AL-JADIDAH in Arabic 3 Jun 96 p 5

[Report by Ahlam Hamad]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gaza, AL-HAYAH AL-JADIDAH — Dr. Fu'ad al-Nahhal, acting secretary general of the Islamic National Salvation Party [INSP], has said that the party understands the bitter reality which regional and international facts have imposed on it, adding that the INSP was established to carry out its duty of political struggle on the basis of ideological and political pluralism within framework of our institutions and under the National Authority [NA].

In an interview with AL-HAYAH AL-JADIDAH, al-Nahhal called for an end to armed action by all factions operating in the Palestinian arena in order to maintain the unity of the people and safeguard their pure blood and allow the NA to realize its national program. He said: "We are endeavoring to bring the NA's and Hamas' [Islamic Resistance Movement] viewpoints closer. We have managed to arrange contacts and meetings between the NA and Hamas and have prepared an initiative on this." He expressed the hope that the initiative would enjoy the backing of everyone so that a serious dialogue could be launched with a view to emerging from the current crisis and unifying the efforts to build our state on the basis of ideological and political pluralism, freedom of opinion, and respect for the law. At the same time, he affirmed the INSP's opposition to the political agreements signed between the NA and the Israeli side.

On the formation of the new Palestinian Government and the possibility of the INSP participating in it, al-Nahhal said that political activity for the sake of preserving Palestinian national and historical rights requires that we participate in institutions that build the state and society in order to safeguard our Palestinian interests, achievements, and rights while maintaining our constructive opposition.

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Egypt

Egypt: Speaker Urges Netanyahu To Take 'Effective' Peace Steps

NC0406112696 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1040 GMT 4 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Paris, 4 Jun (MENA)—People's Assembly Speaker Dr. Fathi Surur said the future of peace is not decided by the policy of a person, but by the policy of a state. He added that peace is not as much an Arab demand as an Israeli one. He said: "I hope the cause of peace will be the focus of attention following Binyamin Netanyahu's winning the Israeli prime minister's job."

In press statements today on the sidelines of an international UNESCO conference he is chairing, Surur said: We hope the steps Netanyahu will take will be effective and lead to peace. Any country's leader is performing a historic act by which he will be remembered if peace is concluded at his hands. Some leaders are cursed when they lead their countries to war. There are leaders remembered with respect when they lead their countries to peace.

He noted that the Arabs have a right to worry when the policy leader changes, but the hope is still that peace will be achieved. He said: The Likud was in power when peace was achieved between Egypt and Israel. He stressed that Egypt is eager to play its leading role in achieving peace at any time and in any age.

On holding an Arab summit, Surur said there are opportunities for holding minisummits but a comprehensive Arab summit depends on eliminating the differences and removing their causes.

Egypt: Envoy to Israel Briefs Musa on Developments

NC0506054596 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0055 GMT 5 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 4 Jun (MENA)—Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa met tonight with Egyptian Ambassador in Israel Muhammad Basyuni.

Following the meeting, Amb. Basyuni said that he submitted to Musa a full report on the outcome of the Israeli elections, the various eventualities with regard to the peace process on all its tracks, and Egyptian-Israeli ties.

In response to a question on the likely Israeli action toward peace following the Likud's victory, the ambassador said that Binyamin Netanyahu has asserted his pledged to continue the process, to start the talks on the final stage with the Palestinians, to make progress on all tracks, and also said he is a "pragmatic" man. The ambassador added: Let us wait and see before prejudging the issue and give Netanyahu a chance to form the new government.

Amb. Basyuni said that Netanyahu will come to Egypt to brief President Mubarak on his plans and intentions in the matter of the peace moves, since these issues concern Egypt. He added that Netanyahu's visit will be made after the Israeli Government is formed and that consultations to form this government will start tomorrow, Wednesday, and the cabinet will be formed within 45 days. He noted that Netanyahu intends to form the government before the new Knesset meets on 17 June.

He stressed that moves toward peace, and not statements, are what concerns Egypt. He said that the principle of land in return for peace is the key to the solution and there will be no peace or stability without it.

In response to a question on current Arab moves, the meetings being held, and the contacts to confront the consequences of the Israeli elections, Amb. Basyuni said: This Arab action is excellent, because the Arab nation's position will be stronger when it unites its voice and this can only bolster the Arab stand and hopefully help influence the decisionmakers.

Concluding his statement, the Egyptian ambassador said: The Arabs are peace advocators and all Arab meetings aim to achieve peace. As President Mubarak said, we must wait until the Israeli prime minister-elect comes to Egypt. He stressed that Israel is aware that Egypt and President Mubarak are the key to peace in the region and this is why Netanyahu's first telephone call abroad was to President Mubarak. He added that Egyptian-Israeli relations are unique because they involve not only bilateral ties, but have a bearing on other issues, including the peace process, whenever there is improvement in these bilateral relations.

Egypt: Yemeni Prime Minister Comments After Meeting Mubarak

NC0406141096 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1210 GMT 4 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 4 Jun (MENA)—President Muhammad Husni Mubarak has received a message from Yemeni President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih dealing with bilateral relations and the work of the Egyptian-Yemeni Higher Committee. This was announced by Yemeni Prime Minister 'Abd-al-'Aziz 'Abd-al-Ghani after an audience with President Mubarak today.

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He said several accords will be signed during the joint higher committee meetings. One, he added, deals with cooperation on fishery, one on trade cooperation, cultural and media agreements, and one on protection of investments, petroleum cooperation and on other investment areas between the two fraternal countries.

On the likelihood of an imminent meeting between presidents Mubarak and Salih, he said meetings and contacts are continuing between the two leaders, noting that they met a short while ago. When circumstances require such a meeting, there are no barriers between the two countries in this respect because they are linked with historical and intimate ties.

Commenting on the Gulf situation and Yemeni-Gulf ties, the Yemeni prime minister said: Our ties with our brothers in the neighboring countries are improving and developing. Meetings are continually held with the brothers in Saudi Arabia and the rest of the Arab Gulf states. We regard our ties with our brothers as eternal and historical and seize every opportunity to strengthen these ties.

On the agreement on fishery cooperation between Egypt and Yemen, he explained that it basically aims to organize bilateral arrangements on the fishing industry.

The Yemeni prime minister commented on developments in the Hanish problem and the arbitration agreed upon by Yemen and Eritrea. He said a technical committee met after signing the accord on principles in Paris on 21 May and the committee's work went quite well. This committee, he added, will (?look into) details of the arbitration agreement and procedures to be followed after signing the accord on principles.

On Yemen's expectations regarding the peace process after the Israeli elections, he said: We share the views of the other Arab brothers on basic Arab issues, foremost of which is the peace process. Unless this issue is resolved, it will preoccupy the Arab nation and the whole world. All peace agreements in the region have to be implemented to ensure that security and stability prevail.

Egypt: Meetings of Egyptian-Yemeni Higher Committee Begin

NC0406145396 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1225 GMT 4 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Cairo, 4 Jun (MENA)—Meetings of the Egyptian-Yemeni Higher Committee opened here today. They are chaired by Dr. Kamal al-Janzuri and Yemeni Prime Minister 'Abd-al-'Aziz 'Abd-al-Ghali.

The Yemeni delegation is made up of the ministers of education, youths, sports, information, and fisheries, deputy minister of culture and tourism, and deputy minister of planning and development. The Egyptian side includes the deputy prime minister and minister of agriculture and the ministers of information, education, trade, planning, industry, economy, and international cooperation, cabinet affairs, and youths and sports.

The joint higher committee is discussing the Yemeni-Eritrean dispute over the Hanish Island, developments in the peace process, and cooperation between the two countries in various fields. [passage omitted]

The committee will also discuss the possibility of reopening the Egyptian trade representative's office in Sanaa, opening a maritime shipping line between the two countries, signing an agreement on trade, cooperation between businessmen, investors, and chambers of commerce.

Egypt: Police Arrest 16 Islamic Militants

NC0406202796 Paris AFP in English 1740 GMT 4 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, June 4 (AFP) — Egyptian security forces have arrested 16 Moslem militants attempting to revive the extremist Jihad group and carry out a series of attacks on security officials, police said on Tuesday [4 June].

The militants were arrested during the past few days in the provincial capital Zaqaziq, 90 kilometers (54 miles) northeast of Cairo, police said.

The cell's leaders, Majdi Sami Muhammad and Jamal Muhammad al-Jawhari, had recruited followers and planned "to revive the Jihad organization in the area," they said.

They plotted "operations against security figures and important institutions, as well as planned robberies of gold shops to finance the purchase of weapons," police said.

Police said they uncovered organizational documents in the leaders' homes during their arrest.

Jihad, along with the larger al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyah, is one of the main militant groups leading an armed campaign against the state which has left more than 1,010 dead since March 1992.

But its operations within Egypt have been largely put down since it claimed responsibility for a 1993 attempt to assassinate then-prime minister Atif Sidqi.

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Morocco

Morocco: Statement Defends Government Stance on Social Dialogue

LD0406223996 Rabat RTM Television Network in Arabic 2030 GMT 4 Jun 96

[Government statement on social dialogue with trade unions and employers]

[FBIS Translated Text] The government has adopted dialogue as a basis for its relationships and as a civilized method of studying the issues in question in the social and economic fields.

Hence, in the first initiative of its kind, the government took the step of consulting the social and economic sectors before the preparation of the financial bill for 1996-1997.

The prime minister held at the time a number of meetings with the various trade unions and employers' organizations during which it was agreed that the social dialogue would continue on a regular basis in order to make it more effective as stipulated by the sublime directives [of the king].

Before the call for a strike by the Democratic Confederation of Labour [CDT] and the General Union of Workers in Morocco [UGTM], the government officially announced on 28 May 1996 the resumption of the aforementioned dialogue and was committed, within this context, to open a purposeful consultation in response to the [trade] union demands which were centered on three major axes: Trade union freedoms, wage increases, and social security.

It is worth recalling here that the government had responded promptly to a number of demands. The compulsory health insurance provisions were approved, the Moroccan pension fund was reorganized, the minimum level for social security benefits was set, the exercising of union rights was facilitated, and the administrative and financial circumstances of those detained were settled. The government also affirmed its commitment to settle other issues in the short term such as wage increases and the settlement of the position of those mobilized within the civil service.

Within the education sector negotiations, the working methodology applied by the ministerial committee led by the minister of state for the interior had made it possible to achieve tangible results reflected in a full agreement with the national trade union of higher education on the by-law pertaining to the educational researchers. Tangible progress was also registered in respect of internal promotion within the comprehensive reform of the basic system for primary and secondary school teachers.

Therefore, one notices that the invitation to strike by the aforementioned trade unions came at a time when those positive steps had been recorded and also at a time when the government had announced the resumption of the social dialogue to study the settlement of the remaining issues in question.

During the opening meeting chaired by the prime minister on Monday 3 June, the aim of which was to define the basic principles and the future working methodology of the dialogue, the CDT and UGTM withdrew from the meeting after laying down impossible preconditions for the resumption of the dialogue. They were also absent from the second meeting which was scheduled on Tuesday 4 June and which was supposed to be devoted to studying the union demands in detail and the government's suggestions about them.

Therefore, while the government expresses its regret over the position taken by the aforementioned unions, it affirms its readiness to resume the process of dialogue with all trade union organizations and professional bodies of employers out of its keen interest in finding adequate and realistic solutions to the issues in question.

Morocco: Minister Regrets Problems in Social Dialogue

LD0406230096 Rabat RTM Television Network in Arabic 2030 GMT 4 Jun 96

[Interview with Employment Minister Amine Damnati by correspondent Mostefa — live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Mostefa] Mr. Minister. Do you have anything to add to the [government] statement.

[Damnati] In fact, Mr. Mostefa, one can only express one's great regret about this situation, particularly since we are, as stressed in the statement, at the start of a dialogue that has already led to positive results and is confidently expected to lead to more positive results in the future.

The government is nevertheless determined to continue the dialogue in order to obtain and reach solutions that would be acceptable to all sides. [passage omitted]

[Mostefa] Mr. Minister: A final question. What are the solutions sought?

[Damnati] I believe that no one can deny that solutions to many cases have been found. For example, solutions have been found in the legislative, legal, and social spheres, and there are possibilities of solutions in the short, medium, and long term. [passage omitted]

[Mostefa] Thank you Minister Amine Damnati.

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Sudan

Sudan: 'Severe Conflict' Between Islamists, Government Reported

NC0406154696 Cairo AL-AHRAM in Arabic 28 May 96 p 8

[Report by 'Abdallah 'Abd-al-Salam from London]

[FBIS Translated Text] Sudanese sources in London have revealed that a severe conflict is currently taking place between the Islamic Front Government in Sudan and the extremist groups in Sudan after the government asked the members of these groups to leave Sudan for fear of stepped up international sanctions against it.

The sources said that some members of the groups had agreed to leave. They have gone to Afghanistan or Somalia. Others have refused to leave and have thus entered into open conflict with al-Turabi's government. The sources pointed out that some members of the extremist groups brought the conflict out into the open through speeches in the mosques about this matter.

The sources explained that the Islamic Front had previously lured these groups to come to Sudan under the pretext that it is ruled by Islamic law. It gave them Sudanese nationality and the right to reside there. In fact, it changed its naturalization law the year before last to enable these people to be nationalized.

The source noted that these groups entered Sudan in large numbers—around 15,000 to 17,000—and took part in economic activities in addition to establishing training camps to carry out their terrorist designs.

The sources said that when international pressure increased on the Front regime after the failed assassination attempt on President Husni Mubarak in Addis Ababa last June and the ensuing international sanctions on Sudan, a dialogue took place between these groups and the Sudanese Government. The latter asked these groups to leave peacefully and offered to provide them with an appropriate residence in Somalia or Afghanistan. The government tried to convince them to leave so that the Islamic state in Sudan would not be endangered. Some of the members agreed to leave, such as the Saudi extremist Usamah Bin-Ladin. But others refused and have threatened to clash with the Sudanese Government.

The sources explained that the situation is very tense now and that the Sudanese Government is threatening to hand over the extremists, who come from numerous Arab and Islamic countries, to respective specialized authorities in those countries if they do not obey orders. The sources pointed out that the Sudanese authorities have once again changed the naturalization law to prevent these people from getting Sudanese nationality.

Sudan: Chief of Staff on Situation in South, Ties to Iran

NC0406200096 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1755 GMT 4 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Addis Ababa, 4 Jun (MENA)—Sudanese Army Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Ibrahim Sulayman today expressed his profound appreciation of Egypt's stance in the Security Council rejecting any military sanctions or an arms embargo against Sudan to avoid causing imbalances.

He gave an interview to MENA's correspondent in Addis Ababa on the sidelines of the African chiefs of staff's conference, currently in session in Addis Ababa. He remarked that this good, noble stand by Egypt stems from Egypt's knowledge that Sudan's security and Egypt's security are the same and that an arms embargo on Sudan would cause weapons to go to John Garang.

The Sudanese chief of staff was asked about recent victories by rebels in south Sudan, particularly the fall of many cities in eastern Sudan to Garang's forces. He replied that the current situation in south Sudan is stable and that Garang's forces are unable to halt the progress of military operations in Sudan.

He mentioned in the interview that there are Eritrean forces fighting alongside John Garang's forces, especially in the Upper Nile area and southeast Sudan. He added that these Eritrean forces are helping rebel forces by providing them with weapons and information. He asserted that Khartoum has evidence on this, particularly in an area called Damazin.

He added that the rebel forces' recent occupation of some areas in eastern Sudan was carried out when these forces sneaked in from Ethiopian territory.

He noted that Eritrean forces help Garang to attack and capture some areas and then withdraw quickly leaving the area for Garang. Lt. Gen. Ibrahim Sulayman did not rule out the possibility of Ethiopian forces also taking part in such operations.

He denied recent reports of a military rebellion within the Sudanese Government forces in west Sudan.

The Sudanese chief of staff commented on the situation in the border strip between Ethiopia and Sudan, namely the area between Metema and Himora, where tension is highest between the two countries. These areas recently were the scene of clashes between the two countries' forces. He said the Ethiopian troops that entered Sudanese territory late last December and early this January are no longer inside the border strip.

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However, he warned of the likelihood of similar incidents occurring in the same border area. He said: I expect few clashes during the agricultural harvest season in these border areas, but Sudan is prepared for anything.

He added that Ethiopian militia always accompany Ethiopian farmers as they sneak into farmland inside Sudan, leading to friction between the two sides. He emphasized that these farmlands are Sudanese. The Ethiopian side of the border is mountainous and not arable so they come into Sudan.

He said that Eritrea, which explicitly announced it was working to topple the current regime in Sudan, is also helping bandits infiltrate Sudan from its territory. The latest incident, he added, took place two months ago when a group infiltrated and attacked a Sudanese police camp. The group killed three people and planted mines before withdrawing.

The Sudanese chief of staff denied the existence of military cooperation between Sudan and Iran. He added that cooperation with Iran is limited to agriculture and projects for roads, bridges, and electricity. He said Sudan depends on diversified sources of weaponry in building its forces.

Sudan: Garang Urges Unity Against al-Bashir, al-Turabi Regime

EA0406190896 (Clandestine) Voice of Sudan Voice of the National Democratic Alliance in Arabic 1715 GMT 4 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Dr. John Garang de Mabior, chairman of the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement and commander in chief of the Sudanese People's Liberation Army, has made a call from inside the country to southern citizens and intellectuals to cooperate in unity, stand together against the al-Turabi-al-Bashir regime, and to avoid responding or being tricked by the likes of Riak Machar, (Teny Dhurgon), and Kerubino Kuanyin Bol, who have surrendered to the National Islamic Front. Dr. John Garang described the al-Turabi-Kerubino agreement as an agreement to wage war and not peace adding that its aim is to ignite an internecine war among southerners. Garang made the remarks during an interview with (Clandestine) Voice of Sudan Voice of the National Democratic Alliance .

Sudan: Syria Not To Abide by UN Sanctions Against Sudan

NC0406144996 Cairo AL-WAFD in Arabic 26 May 96 p 9

[From the "Brothers Page"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Syrian Ambassador in Khartoum Muhammad al-Mahamid has stated that his country will not abide by the diplomatic sanctions the UN Security Council has imposed on Sudan. The ambassador said "Syria realizes that this resolution is unfair and prejudiced." Al-Mahamid said "some states have ulterior motives and want to impose a blockade on Sudan," adding that "Damascus will do its utmost to support Sudan." The Syrian ambassador said the Syrian Government cannot implement Resolution 1054 because Syria does not require entry visas from Sudanese nationals or diplomats.

Meanwhile, the Sudanese newspaper AKHBAR AL-YAWM has quoted a high-ranking Sudanese official as saying that the Sudanese Government has received messages from Russia, China, Jordan, and Germany stressing they will not reduce their diplomatic staff in Sudan. The newspaper says Germany has explained that entry visas will be given to Sudanese nationals on a case-by-case basis.

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Bahrain

Bahrain: Opposition Freedom Movement Denies Plot To Overthrow Rulers

LD0506110896 Tehran IRNA in English 1042 GMT 5 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] London, June 5, IRNA — Bahraini opposition are unmoved by the 'stage-managed' claims this week by the government, saying that there will be no compromise on their demand for the restoration of the Constitution.

The Bahrain Freedom Movement said Wednesday [5 June] it totally rejected the "propaganda scoop" that there had ever been a plot to overthrow the ruling Al Khalifah family, saying such claims were not taken seriously and had been made at least four times before.

The people of Bahrain had always been repressed by the ruling family, which has never heeded calls for political reform, but "whether they suit the taste of the Al Khalifahs or not is immaterial" to their aspirations, it said.

The opposition has been insisting for 18 months on the three main demands for the reinstatement of the Constitution, the release of political prisoners and the return of exiles, the London office of the Bahrain Freedom Movement said.

It said that there was "no room to maneuver and it was time for the government to respond and save the country from the "evils of despotism." Failure to do so, it warned, would only aggravate the situation and lead to further tension.

The opposition group suggested that journalists attending Monday's press announcement of a plot being uncovered were disappointed by the logic of Bahrain's information minister, Muhammad al-Mutawwa' [minister of cabinet affairs and information].

All those present, it said, had seen the state of affairs in the country for themselves and that al-Mutawwa's career was jeopardised by his failure to influence either public or international opinion on the demands of the opposition.

It was the refusal by the government to accede to people's demands that resulted in the flare-up of the situation in December that led to the ongoing popular unrest, the Bahrain Freedom Movement said.

The government, it said, realised it was cornered by the famous 1994 petition signed by 25,000 Bahrainis calling for political reforms but its outdated mentality of blaming others for problems of their own making was only making the crisis worse.

Bahrain: Decree Postpones Consultative Council Extraordinary Session

JN0406175996 Manama Radio Bahrain Network in Arabic 1530 GMT 4 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] His Highness Shaykh 'Isa Bin-Salman Al Khalifah, the beloved amir, issued Amiri Decree No. 6 to postpone the Consultative Council's extraordinary session. The amiri decree stipulates that the extraordinary session of the Consultative Council, which convened on 4 June 1996, shall be prorogued.

Bahrain: Premier, Interior Minister Address Council

JN0406181796 Manama Radio Bahrain Network in Arabic 1530 GMT 4 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] His Highness Shaykh Khalifah Bin-Salman Al Khalifah, the prime minister, visited the Consultative Council at 1000 today to address the Council, which is meeting in an extraordinary session to discuss the government's statement on the security situation and its developments.

The prime minister was received upon arrival at the Council premises by Ibrahim Muhammad Hasan Humaydan, Consultative Council speaker; Faruq Yusuf al-Mu'ayyad, the first deputy speaker; and Muhammad Hasan Kamal-al-Din, second deputy speaker.

The session was attended by [passage indistinct] then there is nothing more serious than that which affects the country's security and safety. Therefore, we are all very anxious to listen to his highness the prime minister to explain matters to the council.

His Highness Shaykh Khalifah Bin-Salman Al Khalifah, the prime minister, then made a speech in which he said:

[Begin recording] In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful. Brother speaker, brother Council members: With blessings from God Almighty, the government was able to unearth a criminal plot that aimed to harm the country's security and stability. The security agencies arrested a minority, which does not want to have the honor of belonging to this noble country and which was planning to topple the regime by force.

This minority chose to sell itself and betray the homeland. They messed around with people's lives and property, caused havoc, and let themselves be carried away by those who have no regard for responsibilities and who could not foresee the consequences.

Brothers: Therefore, it is not a question of riots and sabotage. It is a question of planning, conspiracy, and an attempt to encroach on our regime and independence and to spread sedition among the citizens of the same

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country. For this reason, his highness the amir called [word indistinct] your esteemed council to convene this extraordinary session [words indistinct] for the sake of our nation, security, and stability, which is the most dear thing to us and which provides the means [words indistinct] fortune.

Brothers: I was keen to [words indistinct] this session by myself to underline the gravity of [words indistinct] and to consult with you over the recent events after [words indistinct] security agencies [words indistinct] the advocates of sedition and conspiracy and destroyed their illusions and dreams.

Brother speaker, I hope you would allow the interior minister to deliver his statement to the esteemed council. From God we seek success. [words indistinct] [end recording]

[Words indistinct] to deliver his ministry's statement to the council. The interior minister delivered his statement saying: [words indistinct] esteemed [words indistinct] the public security organs in the Interior Ministry, with God's support and under the directives of our wise leadership, and through continued followup and surveillance operations, preventive measures and intensive efforts to safeguard the security of the homeland and the citizen and entrench stability, and thanks to the mature and positive cooperation of the citizens, [words indistinct] what was called the military wing of Hizballah-Bahrain. This organization is illegal and sought to undermine security and stability in Bahrain, and to overthrow the regime by force to establish [words indistinct] that is loyal to the Islamic Republic of Iran. The security forces succeeded in exposing its organizational structure, bases, and wings, and all its contacts and foreign and domestic links, and arrested some of its founders, leaders, and members. So far, 44 defendants have been arrested. The confessions of [words indistinct] were taken down. The interrogation of the others continues. The elements [word indistinct] being stalked and all activities [words indistinct] abroad. [passage indistinct] establishment of what was called the military wing of Hizballah-Bahrain at the instructions of the [word indistinct] the Iranian authorities and under the supervision and with the backing of the Iranian Revolution Guard Corps [IRGC] intelligence service to attain its illegal objectives which we have mentioned. This was achieved by enticing many Bahraini youths who were studying or residing in the Iranian city of Qom, as well as others who were in Bahrain and in other countries. They recruited them and made them undergo military training in Iran and in Hizballah's camps in Lebanon to form a military base to carry out their evil designs against our stable and secure country.

2. The Iranian authorities overtly and directly became involved as the IRGC intelligence service took it upon itself to support and back the so-called military wing of Hizballah-Bahrain, to follow up all of its activities, and to provide it with large sums of money, not to mention establishing it and forming its bases and wings and furnishing its principal headquarters in the city of Qom.

3. The IRGC intelligence service directly supervised the establishment of the organizational structure of what was called the military wing of Hizballah-Bahrain by giving it a military stamp to help achieve its destructive objectives by force. A military council was formed [words indistinct] through various subcommittees and offices.

4. The Iranian authorities, represented by the IRGC intelligence service, played an important role in the military training of the groups of Bahraini youths that the organization managed to recruit. The training operations began in April 1993, that is 18 months before the terrorist and sabotage operations began. This confirms that these incidents were prepared and planned for in advance. At the beginning, the training took place in the IRGC camps. But, when the international community accused Iran of being behind the terrorist and sabotage operations witnessed by Bahrain, the Iranian authorities asked Hizballah in Lebanon to open its camps to the Bahraini youths who are sent by the organization under the supervision of the Iranian intelligence service. Groups of these youths were actually trained there. In both cases, the Iranian foreign Ministry assumed the responsibility of facilitating their entry into Lebanese territories and arranging the smuggling of the trainees to the Hizballah camps in Lebanon. The military training consisted of operations that help the organization attain its illegal objectives, particularly training on weapons, explosives, and the use of hand grenades in addition to training having to do with self-defense and how to collect information and evade surveillance and security measures, and secure secret documents and papers. At the behest and encouragement of the Iranian intelligence service officials, this evil organization carried out plans to smuggle weapons into Bahrain to be used for criminal operations.

The interior minister said that the security forces succeeded in confiscating various weapons since October 1995.

5. The investigation and the confessions recently revealed the comprehensive nature of the criminal scheme that has been targeting Bahrain's security and stability since the beginning of the sabotage and terrorist operations in late 1994 [words indistinct] all the facts and

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details on the terrorist organization represented by the military wing of Hizballah-Bahrain to the media so that the citizens and world public opinion should become aware of [words indistinct] no place for lies or deception.

Afterward, the speaker of the Consultative Council declared the session adjourned. The prime minister then left the Council. He was given a warm farewell. Afterward, the Consultative Council held its extraordinary session under Speaker Ibrahim Humaydan. The Council members delivered speeches in which they expressed their condemnation and denunciation of the terrorist attempt to destabilize Bahrain. They stressed full support for the government's moves to ensure national stability and safeguard domestic security.

At the end of its extraordinary session, the council issued the following statement:

In response to a kind invitation by His Highness Shaykh 'Isa Bin-Salman Al Khalifah, the beloved amir of the country, may God preserve him, the Consultative Council held an extraordinary session in accordance with Amiri Decree No. 5 issued on 3 June 1996. The Council listened to the speech delivered by His Highness Shaykh Khalifah Bin-Salman Al Khalifah, the prime minister, in which he asked for the Council's advice to the government regarding the events that took place in the country and which were masterminded [words indistinct] and supported by the Islamic Republic of Iran. The council studied with extreme interest the statement made by His Highness Shaykh Muhammad Bin-Khalifah Al Khalifah, the interior minister, before the Council, in which he reviewed the results of the security men's investigations, surveillance, and efforts [passage indistinct] Iran. The Council had a clear view of the dimensions of the scheme threatening Bahrain. Undoubtedly, this scheme targets the country's security, stability, ruling system, and citizens' confidence about their lives, property, and future. The Council is certain that confronting this scheme necessitates that the required measures be taken to maintain the homeland's security and resources in the face of the conspiracies aimed to destabilize it, sow sedition among citizens, terrify defenseless civilians, and obstruct the country's economic and social march and efforts to ensure the population's welfare and prosperity.

It has become evident to the entire world that the Iranian authorities do not want to stop their attempts to destabilize Bahrain and obstruct its efforts to attain the elevated political and economic status it deserves.

In light of that, the Council declares:

1. It greatly thanks His Highness Shaykh 'Isa Bin-Salman Al Khalifah for his eagerness to give the Council an opportunity to participate and give advice, especially on matters that threaten the country's security and stability.

2. It fully supports every measure by the government to confront the dangers facing the country and to show that Bahrain does not accept interference in its affairs and does not allow any state to undermine its independence or jeopardize its security and stability.

3. It calls on citizens to close their ranks behind their wise leadership in order to maintain their achievements and gains.

4. It calls on consultative councils and parliaments throughout the world to condemn the terrorist schemes targeting Bahrain's security and safety and to put an end to (?them).

The council asks its speaker to submit this statement to His Highness Shaykh Khalifah Bin-Salman Al Khalifah, the prime minister. The Council stresses that it will make every effort to raise the contents of this statement at Arab and international forums.

Afterward, the amiri decree proroguing the Consultative Council's extraordinary session was read out.

Bahrain: Foreign Minister Briefs Envoys on Iranian 'Interference'

JN0406173996 Manama Radio Bahrain Network in Arabic 1530 GMT 4 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] This morning, Foreign Minister Shaykh Muhammad Bin-Mubarak Al Khalifah relayed written messages from His Highness Shaykh 'Isa Bin-Salman Al Khalifah, beloved amir of Bahrain, to several heads of state of fraternal and friendly countries, including an explanation of the State of Bahrain's attitude toward security developments in the country and the connection between the Islamic Republic of Iran and rioters and saboteurs in Bahrain.

At 1200 today, Foreign Minister Shaykh Muhammad Bin-Mubarak Al Khalifah met with the ambassadors of the permanent members of the UN Security Council accredited to the State of Bahrain at his ministry office. At 1300 today, the foreign minister received the ambassadors of the fraternal Arab states accredited to the state. Afterward, he received the ambassadors of other states accredited to the State of Bahrain.

During these meetings, the foreign minister explained the State of Bahrain's attitude toward security developments in the country in light of the riots and acts

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of sabotage targeted against public and private property in the country. The foreign minister briefed the envoys on the outcome of investigations with several culprits, their admissions to membership of an organization called Hizballah-Bahrain, and the connections this organization and its members maintain with the Islamic Republic of Iran, which supports and finances this organization and provides training to its members at camps belonging to the Iranian Revolutionary Guards in Iran.

The foreign minister also briefed the ambassadors on the measures taken by the State of Bahrain to deal with the Iranian interference in the domestic affairs of the State of Bahrain and the efforts Iran made to disrupt security and stability in the country.

The meetings were attended by Foreign Ministry Under Secretary Ghazi Muhammad al-Qusaybi.

Bahrain: 'Isa Receives Solidarity Message From Arab League Chief

JN0506073296 Manama WAKH in Arabic 2000 GMT 4 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Manama, 4 Jun (WAKH) — His Highness Shaykh 'Isa Bin-Salman Al Khalifah, amir of the State of Bahrain, received a message from Dr. Ahmad 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid, Arab League secretary general, expressing his support for and solidarity with the State of Bahrain in every measure it takes to confront the terrorism and sabotage supported by Iran against the security and stability of Bahrain.

The secretary general condemned the dangerous Iranian practices that are contrary to good-neighborly relations, the UN Charter, and international law.

Foreign Minister Shaykh Muhammad Bin-Mubarak Al Khalifah received a similar message from the Arab League secretary general in which he expressed his full solidarity with and support for the State of Bahrain.

Bahrain: Iranian Role in Recent Events Confirmed 'Beyond Any Doubt'

JN0406161596 (Internet) AL-AYYAM in Arabic 4 Jun 96

[Unsigned column: "Iran: Indulgence in Evil"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Bahrain has always stressed and insisted that the recent acts of sabotage and explosions that took place in the country were not made in Bahrain, although they were carried out by Bahrainis, and that these acts were fully orchestrated, planned, and financed from abroad. It is not in the Bahraini people's ethics or tradition to harm their country and to allow foreign hands and states to undermine Bahrain's sovereignty and destiny.

This was not an indiscriminate claim or a random allegation. Nor was it a false accusation or mere speculations and suspicions. The footprints were clear and all the evidence pointed to one direction and one address; that is, Tehran, and, more precisely, the city of Qom in Iran. However, the government did not wish to announce any specific accusations then and did not wish to mention by name the party which is known to the people and the entire world for its reckless policies.

This position was not based on fear or slackness, but on patience and wisdom which are a characteristic of the Bahraini leadership. It was also taken deliberately to keep a door open for the Iranian Government in the hope that it will remedy its mistakes, return to the path of right and justice, and stop its flagrant interference in Bahrain's domestic affairs.

Bahrain had hoped all the time that Tehran would come to its senses and arrive at the conclusion that the policy of exporting the revolution to neighboring states is futile. This policy brought Iran extra regional and international isolation, a looming economic collapse, and every kind of domestic political and social problem.

There were hopes that Iran would feel that only the policy of good neighborliness, noninterference in the domestic affairs of regional states, and respect for the choices of each of these states can guarantee security and stability in the Gulf and defuse any potential crisis.

Unfortunately, Bahrain's wise position encountered further intransigence and arrogance from the Iranian rulers. It also encountered further intimidation and a determination to inflict damage and help the saboteurs to implement their schemes and conspiracies.

What was revealed by the investigations in the past few days in the case of the so-called Hizballah-Bahrain and the confessions made by its leaders and members confirm to the world, and beyond any doubt, that Iran is directly involved — in terms of planning, training, and financing — in the subversive and criminal series that aimed to topple the regime in Bahrain.

Therefore, Iran took the risk and placed itself, willingly and knowingly, against its neighbors in Bahrain and the other Gulf states and against the world community, which now must shoulder its full responsibility vis-a-vis this aggressive Iranian policy.

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Bahrain: Structure of 'Hizballah-Bahrain' Disclosed

JN0406142596 (Internet) AL-AYYAM in Arabic 4 Jun 96

[Unattributed report: "Names of Heads of the Organizational Committees of Hizballah-Bahrain"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Hizballah-Bahrain comprises five wings: The military, the financial, the political, the information, and the women wings. Specialized committees emanate from these wings. The military training committee is headed by 'Adil al-Shu'lah, who resides abroad. The committee charged with coordination with the Iranian intelligence service is headed by 'Ali Ahmad Kazim 'Abd 'Ali, alias al-Mutaqawwi, who is now in detention. The information committee is headed by Khalil Sultan, who is resident abroad. The security intelligence committee is headed by Jasim Hasan Mansur al-Khayyat, who is now in detention.

The general plan of Hizballah-Bahrain focuses on recruiting 3,000 people to form a military force and to organize and train them to seize power and establish a pro-Iran regime.

Bahrain: Dailies Comment on 'Plot' Against Country

JN0406110696 Manama WAKH in Arabic 0755 GMT 4 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Manama, 4 Jun (WAKH) — Today's issue of the Bahraini newspaper AL-AYYAM says: There is nothing more pleasing than a proud and lofty homeland and seeing citizens renewing their allegiance to 'Isa [Bin-Salman Al Khalifah], the leader and father—glorious 'Isa.

It adds: Bahrain marked a day of victory yesterday, the day on which right triumphed and wrong was defeated; and the day on which truth, which rancorous and perverse individuals tried to hide from the world, was revealed.

The paper comments on Bahrain's announcement that a plot to oust the ruling system was foiled. It asserts that reality has only one face: the face of right, which we should acknowledge. We should believe in right when facts and evidence prove it, and which we should admit no matter how cruel or embarrassing this may be. The facts are shining and clear in terms of form and substance; thus, no one should have any doubts, though many do because the facts are not clear to them for one reason or another.

The paper says: We are stunned by the plot that was unearthed. We cannot believe or accept that a group of people [words indistinct] would agree, regardless of the price, to hatch plots against their people, children, friends, colleagues, and everyone who belongs to this land in return for empty slogans, a promise to assume power on the remnants and debris of this homeland, and to remain hostage to the foreigners. They would do this in return for illusions and slogans that destroyed nations and peoples who are embroiled in a quagmire of blood, destruction, and loss.

Concluding, the paper says: Today is the day of the homeland, clear positions, and deep-rooted principles. Today everyone stands in one rank for the sake of the homeland.

The newspaper AKHBAR AL-KHALIJ asserts that the plot exposed the state that hides behind Islam and its declarations of being in the right. A commentary says: The acts of treason cannot be justified by those who hesitate, those who cause doubt, and by some organs inside and outside the country. They used to say that the statements of our officials on the involvement of foreign countries and organizations, particularly Iran and Hizballah, are meant to evade the realities and to hold foreign quarters responsible for what takes place in the country. They used to claim that these events were the result of internal problems in Bahrain.

It adds: The failure of these regimes to achieve progress and prosperity for their citizens prompted them to spread violence and terrorism everywhere. Thus, they were stigmatized by the whole world with concocting plots, recruiting groups, financing camps, encouraging treason, and fighting peoples and countries. These are all ugly positions and actions that can be carried out only by the regimes that gave up all ethical values with the aim of reaching their rancorous goals and corrupt dreams. Such regimes do not encourage people to adhere to noble objectives. They are abandoned by the civilized world, and their actions are reminiscent of the ages of darkness and backwardness. This is a war against Islam and Muslims.

Kuwait

Kuwait: Foreign Ministry Reaffirms Support for Bahrain

LD0506105396 Kuwait Radio Kuwait in Arabic 1000 GMT 5 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] An authoritative Foreign Ministry source has made the following statement: The State of Kuwait has followed with great concern the statements of officials from the fraternal State of Bahrain on the criminal attempt to undermine fraternal Bahrain's security and stability and on the arrest of a number of people involved in the criminal attempt to meddle in its internal affairs.

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The State of Kuwait reiterates its firm support for the fraternal State of Bahrain and for any measures which are deemed necessary to protect its sovereignty, security, and stability in accordance with the assertions made by His Highness Shaykh Sa'd al-'Abdallah al-Salim Al-Sabah, heir apparent and prime minister, during his telephone conversation with his brothers the leaders of the fraternal State of Bahrain and in accordance with the final statement of the GCC ministerial council which reaffirmed support for and solidarity with the fraternal State of Bahrain. [passage omitted]

Oman

Oman: Bahraini Transportation Minister Delivers Message to Qabus

JN0406170796 Manama WAKH in Arabic 0750 GMT 4 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Manama, 4 Jun (WAKH) — Bahraini Transportation Minister Shaykh 'Ali Bin-Khalifah Al Khalifah left Muscat this morning following a two-day visit to the sisterly Sultanate of Oman, where he met with His Majesty Sultan Qabus Bin-Sa'id.

The Bahraini minister conveyed a written message to his Majesty Sultan Qabus from his brother His Highness Shaykh 'Isa Bin-Salman Al Khalifah. The message deals with the continuous consultations between the two leaders and briefs His Majesty Sultan Qabus about the latest developments in Bahrain. [passage omitted]

Qatar

Qatar: Amir Receives Bahraini Amir's Message on 'Recent Developments'

JN0406205296 Manama Radio Bahrain Network in Arabic 1530 GMT 4 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] His Highness Shaykh Hamad Bin-Khalifah Al Thani, amir of Qatar, received a message from his brother His Highness Shaykh 'Isa Bin-Salman Al Khalifah, the beloved amir of the country. The message deals with the recent developments in Bahrain.

The message was delivered by Transportation Minister His Highness Shaykh 'Ali Bin-Khalifah Al Khalifah, when his highness the amir of Qatar received him in Doha today. [passage omitted]

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia: Crown Prince on Plans To Reinforce Security

LD0406134096 Riyadh Saudi Arabian Kingdom Radio Network in Arabic 1130 GMT 4 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, crown prince, deputy prime minister, and commander of the National Guard, has said that he regards security as the basis for the stability of human society, the most important element for building it, and the cornerstone for its prosperity and development. He added that without security no human society can carry out its duties and fulfill its obligations toward its people on the one hand and toward the whole of mankind on the other.

His royal highness the crown prince said that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, under the leadership of King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz Al Sa'ud, the custodian of the two holy mosques, is proceeding, with determination and resoluteness, with the implementation of its programs and plans aimed at reinforcing the security of the Saudis against the frivolity of mischievous people, irrespective of their nationality.

His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz made these statements during a Council of Ministers meeting he chaired last night at al-Salam Palace in Jeddah. In a statement to SPA after the meeting, Information Minister Dr. Fu'ad Bin Abd al-Salam al-Farisi said that, in a comprehensive speech, his royal highness the crown prince reviewed the developments of security in Saudi society and the progress achieved in this respect from the reign of the late King 'Abd-al-'Aziz Al Sa'ud, the unifier of the kingdom and the founder of its revival in modern times, to the reign of King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz Al Sa'ud. He also highlighted the numerous services offered to the citizens, particularly in the area of security.

Al-Farasi added that his royal highness the crown prince called on Saudi men and women to confront any close or distant attempt aimed, God forbid, at undermining security in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, disturbing its peace, or harming the gains and achievements that have been made at all levels and that have turned our country, praise be to God, into an example of progress, prosperity, security, and safety.

His royal highness the crown prince urged the Saudi community to be fully aware of the need to give its childrem a sound and safe education in order to reinforce their faith in God and their love of the homeland and increase their efforts to expand their

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scientific knowledge in their own interest and that of their society.

On regional issues, Dr. al-Farisi said that his royal highness the crown prince reviewed with the Council of Ministers the security developments which took place in the sisterly state of Bahrain on 3 June. His royal highness reiterated that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia stands by Bahrain in everything that preserves its security and safeguards its stability and territorial integrity. [passage omitted]

Saudi Arabia: Paper Says Iran Backs Armed Movements in Bahrain, Elsewhere

NC0406130796 Paris AFP in English 1019 GMT 4 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Riyadh, June 4 (AFP)—An official Saudi newspaper on Tuesday [4 June] accused Iran of violating Islam by supporting armed movements in the Gulf Arab state of Bahrain and other countries.

The Iranian-backed plot to overthrow the Bahraini government revealed in Manama on Monday is an "example of what Iran thinks about relations between peoples," the AL-YAWM daily said.

"If the world is to start following the Iranian model, each country would from now on arm, train and finance foreign nationals in order to use them as tools of destruction in their countries," it said.

"Not only do the Iranian acts contradict Islam, they also constitute a flagrant violation of Islamic principles," it said.

The daily invited Bahrain's partners in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) — Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Oman — to support Manama "because none of them is protected from Iranian sabotage."

Bahrain said Monday it had arrested a group of Iranian-trained Islamic militants called Hizballah-Bahrain who allegedly plotted a revolution against the government, prompting Manama to recall its ambassador from Tehran.

The Gulf Arab archipelago has been hit by 18 months of anti-government unrest led by Shiite Muslims demanding a restoration of the parliament which the Sunni Muslim-led authorities suspended in 1975.

At least 22 people have died in the violence.

Yemen

Yemen: Salih Receives Bahraini Amir's Message, Stresses Support

JN0406195296 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 4 Jun 96

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Translated Text] Brother Lieutenant General 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, president of the republic, this evening received Bahraini Transportation Minister brother 'Ali Bin-Khalifah Al Khalifah, who conveyed to the brother president a message from his brother His Highness Shaykh 'Isa Bin-Salman Al Khalifah, amir of sisterly Bahrain. The message deals with the brotherly bilateral relations, developments in Bahrain, and regional and Arab issues and developments of interest to the two countries and the Arab nation.

During the meeting, the brother president reiterated our country's support for sisterly Bahrain and for all that would maintain its security and safeguard its stability and safety against any dangers or challenges. He referred to the brotherly, close relations between the two countries. He stressed that Bahrain's security is part of the security of Yemen and the Arabian Peninsula and the Gulf, and that the national Arab security is an integrated, indivisible whole.

The brother president asked the Bahraini envoy to convey his greetings to His Highness Shaykh 'Isa Bin-Salman Al Khalifah and his heir apparent, wishing them continued health and happiness and the brotherly Bahraini people further security, stability, and prosperity.

The meeting was attended by Transportation Minister Ahmad al-Anisi and the delegation accompanying the Bahraini transportation minister.

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Israel: Peres, Netanyahu Discuss Security Issues, Power Transfer

TA0406154396 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1405 GMT 4 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister-elect Binyamin Netanyahu and outgoing Prime Minister Shim'on Peres this morning held a meeting on the procedure for the transfer of power. The two devoted most of the meeting to security issues. Shlomo Raz spoke with the two after the meeting:

[Begin recording] [Peres] Most of our meeting this morning was devoted to the main issue on the agenda — namely security-related issues. These issues cannot be delayed, and there are no substantial differences of opinion regarding security issues such as how to prevent attacks in the short term and how to deal with medium and long term dangers. I believe this is a joint interest of all Israeli parties, factions, and leaders. We held an extremely serious and businesslike discussion on this issue and will continue to discuss it. We also determined the procedures for the transfer of power and appointed the persons who will deal with this issue. As far as I am concerned, I can promise that this will be done in a very dignified, responsible, and orderly manner.

[Raz] Did you discuss the option of a national unity government?

[Netanyahu] We only discussed the issues mentioned and have nothing to add to this. Our meeting focused on these security issues.

[Raz] Mr. Netanyahu, referring to the security issue — are any immediate security decisions called for?

[Netanyahu] We agreed that if special decisions are called for during the transition period, the two of us will hold consultations.

[Raz] What about the issue of redeployment in Hebron?

[Netanyahu] I asked to study the issue, and Mr. Peres will direct the elements dealing with this issue to update me on all the details of the agreement. I will refer to the issue afterward. [end recording]

Israel: Likud, Labor Holding Initial Contacts on Unity Government

TA0406183396 Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1700 GMT 4 Jun 96

[Video report by political correspondent 'Imanu'el Rosen]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Senior Likud and Labor sources have been holding preliminary phone contacts on the issue of establishing a national unity government. Despite the fact that there is a slight chance for this, the contacts indicate that the gaps on the Palestinian issue are not large. Likud sources confirm that Netanyahu wants to achieve additional interim agreements with the Palestinians in the next few months. The issue of a national unity government was not raised during the first meeting held today between the outgoing and incoming prime ministers. Our political correspondent 'Imanu'el Rosen reports:

[Begin recording] [Rosen] [passage omitted] Was the meeting between Binyamin Netanyahu and Shim'on Peres the beginning of a wonderful friendship which will lead to a national unity government? Chances for this are slim. Despite this, over the last 24 hours preliminary phone contacts have been held between senior officials in the two parties. These contacts led to, among other things, Yosi Beilin's surprising statement in favor of a national unity government.

[Beilin] In my opinion the Palestinians, Labor, and the Likud have an attainable common denominator. Naturally, the Likud is in charge — there can be no doubt about this. If we are inside, however, we will be able to complete these negotiations in the most reasonable manner. In my opinion — and perhaps I am too optimistic — we will be able to reach approximately the same arrangements that Labor would have achieved on its own.

[Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew at 1700 GMT on 4 June includes a report by political correspondent Nisim Mish'al adding: "Something very interesting is happening in Labor. The great mystery has to do with what Shim'on Peres will say, but beyond Peres senior ministers including Baraq, Beilin, Shohat, and Ben-Eli'ezer favor the option of a national unity government. They are confronted by Bar'am and Shahal, who oppose this option. I believe, however, that Labor is ripe to enter a national unity government on the basis of the acceptance of minimal conditions concerning the peace process."]

[Rosen] Netanyahu's associates are already working out the guidelines of his policy, and from what we have learned Beilin's assessment is not far from reality. Regarding the Palestinian issue, the guidelines speak about adhering to the clauses of the agreement; attempts to introduce security improvements; sign additional interim agreements during the permanent arrangement negotiations; and beef up some of the settlements. 'Arafat is warned that attacks will lead to the annulment of the agreements, but extensive economic aid will be given to the Palestinian Authority.

As far as Jordan is concerned, the guidelines call for extensive economic aid while involving Jordan in the

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permanent arrangement. With Lebanon, the guidelines speak of a security agreement ending with an IDF [Israel Defense Forces] withdrawal.

Today Netanyahu held meetings with the Mosad chief, the chief of staff, and the U.S. ambassador in Israel. All of them are preparing the prime minister-elect for the day when will have to start implementing his policy. [end recording]

Israel: Netanyahu, Likud MK on Coalition Contacts, Unity Proposal

TA0506105096 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1000 GMT 5 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister-elect Binyamin Netanyahu has said he can not deal with the distribution of government portfolios to Likud officials before he completes the allocation of portfolios to the Likud's coalition partners. Netanyahu made these remarks at a meeting with the Likud's team for the coalition negotiations.

After the meeting, Knesset Member [MK] Moshe Qatzav told our party affairs correspondent Yaron Deqel that the Likud intends to complete the coalition agreement and formulate the government's basic guidelines within several days. In Qatzav's opinion, it is possible to form a coalition before the Knesset convenes in two weeks.

Our correspondent Gil Litman reports that the chairman of the Central Elections Committee will meet with Binyamin Netanyahu this afternoon and hand him the official results of the elections for the Knesset and the premiership.

Netanyahu's aides met today with the director general of the Foreign Ministry and the commander of the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] Central Command in order to study the issue of the Hebron redeployment. At the meeting, the participants discussed the political, security, and legal ramifications of the redeployment in the city. This week, the outgoing government ratified the agreement on the Hebron withdrawal but noted that the new government is in charge of the matter.

Senior Likud officials criticized the demands posed by the religious parties and warned that the Likud would find them hard to agree to. MK Qatzav pointed out that some of the ultra-Orthodox demands were unacceptable to the Likud.

Agriculture Minister Ya'aqov Tzur is in favor of the Labor Party's joining a national unity government. He told our correspondent Shim'on Vilna'i that the Labor Party should be part of the government because the state is facing a critical and crucial period.

Meretz Chairman Ran Kohen said that if the Labor Party joined the Netanyahu government it would be a slap in the face to those who voted for Peres. In Kohen's opinion, the paper formulated by the NRP [National Religious Party] together with Yosi Beilin after Yitzhaq Rabin's assassination, which is now being proposed as a basis for national unity, is a letter of capitulation designed to enable the Labor Party to crawl into a national unity government. His remarks were reported by our correspondent Pe'erli Shahar.

Israel: Shahaq on Identity of Defense Minister, Hebron Redeployment

TA0406122096 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1100 GMT 4 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Chief of Staff Amnon Shahaq says the army is not dealing with the identity of the next defense minister, adding that all the reports in this issue are rumors spread by the media. Our correspondent Yo'el Nir reports that Lieutenant General Shahaq made these remarks when leaving the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, which today dealt with the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] redeployment in Hebron. Lt. Gen. Shahaq said the IDF has already started the redeployment, adding that if it receives an order from the political echelon, it will be ready to redeploy under the stipulations of the agreement within hours. The chief of staff added that throughout May there was not even one terrorist incident in Judaea and Samaria.

Chief of Staff Shahaq is currently meeting with Binyamin Netanyahu in the Knesset. The meeting is also being attended by Mosad chief Dani Yatom.

Israel: Sharon Portfolios—Defense, Finance, or Nothing

TA0506081096 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 5 Jun 96 p 4

[Report by Bina Barzel]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Binyamin Netanyahu did not call Knesset Member [MK] Ari'el Sharon yesterday either. The reports about the crisis that broke out between the two yesterday spurred Likud activists to try to find a way to mediate between them.

Close Sharon aides said that he is unwavering in his position that if he is not appointed either defense or finance minister he prefers to remain outside the government and serve as a regular MK.

According to a senior Likud official who discussed with him alternatives to those portfolios, Sharon said the following:

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"There is a post that I want and can perform better than most other candidates: defense minister. There is a post that I am prepared to take and can do very well: finance minister. I do not plan to carry out any other job in this government."

Sharon was given various alternatives over the past few days. Among them: An ungraded economic portfolio, which would include transportation, industry and trade, or even "the Jewish people" portfolio, which would include powers transferred to it from the Jewish Agency.

Sharon totally rejected all the suggestions. He came to the Knesset yesterday and participated in one of the subcommittees of the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee but refused to answer questions about the crisis with Netanyahu.

According to Likud sources, the rift between the two started the moment Netanyahu's election as prime minister became known. [passage omitted]

Israel: Netanyahu's 'Strategist' on Political Stands

TA0406175596 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 4 Jun 96 pp 2-4

[Interview with Dr. Dore Gold, "Binyamin Netanyahu's political adviser and strategist," by Smadar Peri; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Peri] In a very brief reference in his victory speech, Prime Minister-elect Binyamin Netanyahu pledged to continue the negotiations with the Palestinians. What does this mean?

[Gold] It is primarily a commitment to the framework that already exists between Israel and the Palestinian Authority [PA] and a commitment to continue negotiations in both the economic and the political aspects. After that, assuming that the Palestinian side is keeping its commitments, we should move on to talks on the permanent arrangement.

[Peri] So, the Palestinians can relax. The Netanyahu government intends to negotiate a permanent agreement with them?

[Gold] In the election campaign, Netanyahu asked who can conduct better, more determined, negotiations on the permanent arrangement — the previous government or the new one? This is a statement of the itention to negotiate on a permanent arrangement.

[Peri] What kind of an a minister elect believes that the Palestinians should be given maximum autonomy, while Israel keeps maximum security.

[Gold] Naturally, the Likud stands for Palestinian self-government. This is the starting point. Israel has several important interests in Judaea and Samaria that it must keep.

[Peri] Such as?

[Gold] Our list is ready: Security, strategic security, IDF [Israel Defense Forces] presence in the Jordan Rift Valley and other strategic sites in Judaea and Samaria and, if 'Arafat is unable, does not want to, or does not show he is committed to security issues, Israel must safeguard its own security and have freedom of action in defending its citizens.

There is also the water issue. Israel depends on the ground water in Judaea and Samaria. A fourth [as published] issue is Jerusalem and its vicinity. Finally, I would add what is called "demographic security:" We cannot afford to have the PA flooding Judaea and Samaria with refugees. After all, the demographic balance in Judaea and Samaria will affect the situation inside the Green Line.

[Peri] How do you defend against what you call "a flood" of refugees?

[Gold] This is one of the most basic differences between an independent Palestinian state and self-government which is less than a state. An independent Palestinian state can have full control over immigration policies....

[Peri] ...and allow people in.

[Gold] That is correct. We cannot rule out the possibility that Lebanon might decide to deport Palestinian Arabs. Where will they go? If the Palestinians were to have exclusive control over border passages, as in every state, they could allow them in.

[Peri] When you speak of demographic balance in the territories, one could think of beefing up settlements or setting up new ones. Will the Netanyahu government adopt this line?

[Gold] It is still to early to describe the nature of Jewish settlements. At the same time, Netanyahu spoke in the past of the importance of security zones in Judaea and Samaria, and settlements are also important for Israel's security. I wish to remind you that, in his speech about Oslo B, late Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin said he has never decided not to expand the existing settlements. He specifically spoke about the need to allow expanding the number of residents and the settlements' infrastructure. This is a certain basis that could be viewed as a point of reference.

The new cabinet will have to decide what its policy will be but, even under the previous government and late Yitzhaq Rabin, there was no absolute freeze of Jewish life in Judaea and Samaria.

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[Peri] Dr. Hanan 'Ashrawi said on CNN that Netanyahu's speech was too vague, and that she hopes that the Palestinians will have the right of self-determination. Is this just another name for a Palestinian state? Should they stop dreaming about it?

[Gold] Anyone may bring their dream to the negotiating table. This government's point of departure is opposition to the establishment of an independent Palestinian state in Judaea and Samaria.

[Peri] Nonetheless, what rights will they receive?

[Gold] Very often, and I am speaking for myself now, we speak in headlines: autonomy, self-government, state. The important thing to do now is define our interests. We have to remember that Israel has many interests in Judaea and Samaria that I have already mentioned. Jordan has interests there too, and so do the Palestinians.

We have to build a new framework, a new reality, that will provide for all the interests in Judaea and Samaria. The concept according to Netanyahu is that they get maximum self-government while we have maximum security. This is the formula.

[Peri] You speak of a new reality, yet I could not help noticing that instead of saying "territories" you keep saying "Judaea and Samaria," not even "the West Bank."

[Gold] Everyone has their own geographic concepts. What is important is what arrangement we will have at the end of the day.

[Peri] The key question on the minds of all the partners to the peace process, not only the Palestinians, is: What about the Hebron evacuation?

[Gold] This will be a decision the new government will have to make. There are several elements at play here: On one hand, there is a commitment to keep an agreement, on the other hand we have the security of the Jews. We should remember that when it implemented the Oslo Accords, the previous government did not adhere to the timetable specified in the accords either. It examined the security situation at every point.

Look, we keep talking about what the Jews should do, but there is a list of things the Palestinians should do. I believe that the foundation for implementing the agreement is reciprocity. Let them do their share.

One of the problems of the Oslo agreement is the way the Israeli Government handled violations of the agreement on the Palestinian side. I believe that the government found itself in a very difficult situation regarding the violations: Had it admitted that 'Arafat was violating the accords, they would have been, in fact, admitting that they had been slapped in the face. There were times when they could not deal or address the violations, and I found out about the problem.

[Peri] Would you say that the Labor government deliberately ignored the violations?

[Gold] I remember that Beni Begin, speaking once at the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, read out an IDF list of all the violations and Prime Minister Shim'on Peres replied: "I am not excited." This means that they had a problem with the violations.

After all, if 'Arafat feels there are no sanctions against him and that, on our side, no one is excited about the violations, why should he worry about security matters. Only recently, after four major terror attacks and after he received information from us that fundamentalist elements intended to murder him, did he start taking the security issues more seriously. This means that had we insisted on the issue of the violations sooner, we could have prevented some of the last year's terror attacks.

[Peri] Yes, but two days ago Shin Bet head 'Ami Ayalon stated that our cooperation with the Palestinian security elements is much better than expected.

[Gold] But this is something recent. Let us look at remarks made by the head of the IDF Intelligence Branch in mid-January. He said that Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] continues building its infrastructure. He estimated that 'Arafat is saving Hamas to be used as a bargaining chip in the negotiations on the permanent arrangement. This means that, although 'Arafat did not personally engage in terrorist activity, he used Hamas to promote Israeli concessions, just like al-Asad is doing with Hizballah.

The new government will not accept this.

[Peri] In other words, the message being sent out to the Palestinians is that there is an equation here stating: "If you violate, we will not implement. If you fail to act, we won't act either."

[Gold] I do not want to say how this dialogue will proceed. This will be decided by the political echelon. We will certainly insist, however, that the Palestinians fulfill their commitment to disarm Hamas. There is a long list of issues. I have a file on this issue, but I do not want to open it now.

[Peri] How many issues are dealt with in this file?

[Gold] I do not want to elaborate. If they fulfill their part, I believe that the new government will fulfill its part.

[Peri] Would you say that you or somebody else have taken care to note all the Palestinian violations since the Oslo Accords?

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[Gold] Such a thing exists. This was done not only by Israeli opposition elements, but by the IDF as well.

[Peri] What kind of hope can we give the Palestinians after the Israeli political turnabout and in view of their concern about Netanyahu's and the Likud's rise to power?

[Gold] The important thing is that they have a realistic partner which bases its policy on a correct reading of the situation. If the other side is also realistic, we can reach understandings. I think that the Palestinians can be encouraged, because it is with a conservative government that it is possible to best do business.

[Peri] What happens if they decide that there is no room for hope and resume the attacks? Can the intifadah be resumed?

[Gold] I do not want to go into details, because this depends on the circumstances. The intifadah, however, can restart because of a prolonged closure or the difficult economic situation in Gaza. The Palestinians' mood depends on many things.

[Peri] Do you support the concept of separation?

[Gold] According to my strategic concept it is impossible to build security by means of a wall. The Chinese and the Romans tried it, but it is unfeasible — especially when antiterror efforts are based on intelligence and pinpointed activity.

We have a complicated situation in Judaea and Samaria in which Israeli, Palestinian, and Jordanian interests are involved. I believe the idea that one element be in full control on the ground is unfeasible.

We must work out something new in the region, something which will reflect the Palestinians' need for self-rule, defend Israeli interests, and answer Jordan's needs.

Prince Hasan once said that he regards Judaea and Samaria as terra media [last two words in Latin], a meeting point of cultures and nations. I am speaking here of the need to reach a new arrangement which will reflect the interests of all sides.

[Peri] Netanyahu said that Jerusalem will remain united under Israeli sovereignty. What can the Palestinians hope to achieve on this issue?

[Gold] Whoever thinks the new government will compromise on the issue of Jerusalem's sovereignty should forget about it.

[Peri] Before the elections there was talk about secret discussions on the formation of "another" Jerusalem. Do you accept this option?

[Gold] I think there were many distortions in these reports. There was talk about establishing al-Quds in Abu-Dis and al-Zahiriyah. From what I gathered, however, they wanted to connect al-Quds to the Old City and create passages within the Old City itself. This is unacceptable and irrelevant. I do not think there will be any territorial compromises in Jerusalem.

If we are referring here to religious issues, this is a subject which has been accepted by Israeli governments in the past, both Labor and the Likud. Our cabinet will have to discuss this issue. However, they can forget about the idea of dividing Jerusalem.

[Peri] What about Orient House? Will it be closed down?

[Gold] I do not want to discuss the issue at this point.

[Peri] Can you explain why it irritates the Likud so much?

[Gold] There is a question here of a foreign rule, or elements of such a rule, within sovereign Israeli territory — giving the impression that they are preparing the infrastructure for dividing the city into two administrations. Such a thing should be forbidden.

If the Oslo Accords were supposed to be a tool for guaranteeing Isareli exclusiveness in Jeruslem then it has failed, because the outgoing government did not deal with the Palestinian violations in Jerusalem. We must guarantee that there are no PA governing institutions in Jerusalem.

[Peri] It is likely you have followed the negotiations with Syria. Do you have any conclusions?

[Gold] When we achieved peace with Egypt, this was done without shots and terrorism. The same holds true for Jordan. What happened with the Syrians? They used Hizballah to act against the IDF in the security zone. Just as the case with the Palestinians, we found ourselves in a situation in which we have to hold negotiations while suffering terrorism. Israel must not accept such a situation. No progress can be made while the other side is using terrorism to pressure Israel. We must enter the negotiations with Syria without preconditions.

[Peri] You are claiming that the negotiations with Syria should be held without preconditions, but in his election campaign Netanyahu announced that there will be no withdrawal from the Golan Heights. This is a precondition.

[Gold] You should clearly distinguish between your position when entering the negotiations and the rules of the negotiations themselves. We must not start the negotiations by conceding sovereignty on the Golan

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Heights to Syria, but we also did not demand as a precondition that Syria recognize Isareli sovereignty over the Golan Heights.

I believe that eventually it will be possible to reach certain understandings, and I also believe it is possible to reach a basis for certain arrangements. I also think the optimal line for Israeli security is the present line — namely the Golan Heights' first mountain ridge line.

At the same time it is possible to negotiate with Syria over arrangements that will address the needs of both sides.

[Peri] On the very day on which Netanyahu was declared the new prime minsiter four IDF soldiers were killed by a bomb planted by Hizballah.

[Gold] One of the things Netanyahu mentioned was the need to exert political pressure on Syria. Among Western countries there is even a plan calling for economic sanctions against countries like Iran, Iraq, or Libya. If Syria continues to use terrorism against Israel as a way to push us toward concessions, we must make it clear to al-Asad that if he wants progress to be made in the peace process, then he has no terrorist options. If he wants, however, to use terrorism as a political option in order to achieve strategic goals, then he should not expect warm relations with the West or significant progress in the peace process.

[Peri] What is your opinion about "the new Middle East" concept? Peres invented it, but the Arabs hated it.

[Gold] I believe that Peres was only partially correct. I prefer to speak of a "different" rather than a "new" Middle East. In my consultations with Mr. Netanyahu I have always maintained that the quality of peace between Israel and the Arab states will never be better than the quality of peace between the Arabs themselves.

[Peri] I want to use this meeting with you to find out whether any kind of contacts have been held between Netanyahu and the Syrians, if only via a third party?

[Gold] I can tell you with complete certainty that no contacts have been held. There were no face-to-face meetings and no messages were relayed. I do not know why Faruq al-Shar' said what he said.

"A Skullcap-Clad Academic"

Three years ago, on the night in which the Knesset endorsed the Oslo Accords, opposition chairman Binyamin Netanyahu phoned Dr. Dore Gold, a senior researcher in Tel Aviv University's Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies.

"Let's start working on an alternative," Netanyahu proposed.

Since then close relations were forged between the prime minister-elect and the skullcap-clad academic, who was born in Connecticut, came to Israel in 1976, and made aliya in 1980.

Dr. Dore Gold, 42, accompanied Netanyahu on all his meetings with Arab leaders, both the secret and open ones. The highlights were the secret meetings with King Husayn and Crown Prince Hasan.

Last weekend the life of the man who was the "adviser to the opposition chairman" changed beyond recognition. Dr. Gold was privy to an American initiative for security meetings between Israeli and Arab academics and strategists. One can safely assume that Netanyahu was briefed in detail about these meetings, which were held in low profile, in some cases in countries with which Israel has no peace relations.

The phone in Gold's Jerusalem apartment does not stop ringing. He himself participated in the nocturnal meeting at Jerusalem's International Convention Center two days ago with Egyptian Ambassador Muhammad Basyuni, who came to hear from Netanyahu what his proposals are for advancing the peace process with Syria. Dr. Gold was the one who talked by phone over the weekend with Abu-Mazin [Mahmud 'Abbas], the number two man in the PLO, on Netanyahu's behalf.

The media immediately dubbed Dr. Gold Netanyahu's "political adviser." He still has no official title, no cellular phone nor beeper. There are very good chances, however, that in the near future he will establish and direct a national security council which will formulate Netanyahu's peace policy.

Israel: 22,000 Palestinian Workers Allowed Entry

TA0506084196 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0800 GMT 5 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] There has been a further easing of the closure on the territories. The defense establishment has authorized the entry of 22,000 married Palestinian workers over the age of 35.

Our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem reports that 10,000 workers from Judaea and Samaria and 12,000 from the Gaza Strip will be permitted to enter Israel. The entry of 350 merchants from the territories has also been allowed.

Israel: Shahaq Says Lebanese Government Increasing Rule in South

TA0406160896 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1400 GMT 4 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] [passage omitted] The IDF's [Israel Defense Forces] chief of staff told the

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Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee that the army remains ready to redeploy but in the meantime is in full control of Hebron. David Ze'ev reports:

[Ze'ev] [passage omitted] According to a Knesset official at the meeting, the general said that while the military remains ready to redeploy in Hebron on short notice, it is still the only military force in the city and is deployed throughout Hebron. The chief of staff reported tension among Hebron residents in anticipation of what the future holds.

In response to a question, he said there are no specific threats of terrorist attacks. An intelligence colonel told the committee that in the period leading up to the elections public pressure and the prevailing impression were greater, as he put it, than the warnings of attacks themselves.

On Lebanon, General Shahaq spoke of an internal confrontation between Hizballah and the Lebanese Government. Citing the forthcoming elections in Lebanon as a possible reason, he told the committee that for the first time in many years the Beirut government is showing greater interest in what is happening in the south and in increasing its rule there. The general said that if the trend continues Israel would find itself in a more comfortable position there, but that Hizballah has not laid down its arms and still intends to strike at Israel and that the organization is getting help within the security zone.

Israel: Olmert Denies Alleged Remarks on Keeping Orient House Open

TA0406121796 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 4 Jun 96 p 4

[FBIS Translated Text] The Likud may avoid closing down Orient House, the unofficial PLO representation in Jerusalem.

This emerges from remarks made by Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert: "I am not interested in stating that the building will be closed, because I care about putting an end to the illegal activity that is designed to harm the status of Jerusalem as Israel's capital," Olmert told an AFP reporter in Jerusalem.

The question of shutting down Orient House "is still open," he said, contradicting remarks made by Prime Minister-elect Binyamin Netanyahu during the elections campaign that he intends to shut it down.

Olmert said, at the same time: "The new government under Netanyahu will put an end to activities concerning Jerusalem that are associated with, originate from, or follow directives from the Palestinian Authority, including visits by foreign diplomats to Orient House."

Referring to Jordan, Olmert said that Jordan's King Husayn should increase his involvement in the Jerusalem issue: "King Husayn is encouraged by the fact that Netanyahu was elected because he knows very well that Bibi is not thinking only about the Palestinians. He is also open to other alternatives, including a Jordanian solution."

Our correspondent Itamar Eichner adds that later, Olmert denied the above remarks, saying: "The question of shutting the building down is not open. We have a stand on the issue. How this will be done is up to the prime minister to decide, after the government is established. The prime minister will decide on the timing when the time comes. The AFP correspondent has taken my remarks out of their context."

It should be noted, however, that in private conversations Olmert held recently, he said that if the Palestinians keep the agreements they had signed, activity in the building could continue.

Israel: Netanyahu Said To Herald 'Americanization' of Israel

TA0206144296 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT (24 SHA'OT supplement) in Hebrew 2 Jun 96 p 5

[Commentary by Sever Plotzker: "More Modern, More Yuppie, More American"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The elections were ultimately decided almost by a flip of the coin. A minuscule number of votes separated Peres from Netanyahu, a figure far smaller than the standard margin of error in any statistical survey.

This result could reflect either a public that is split or, conversely, a situation where seemingly conflicting positions are actually quite similar. When the gap is so small, the society is drawn to the political center. The panicmongers prefer to assert that the elections exposed the yawning cultural chasm in the Israeli public. As evidence of this, they point to the great success enjoyed by the parties that underscored everything that is different and divisive in Israeli society instead of stressing its communal and unifying characteristics.

But a different interpretation is possible. In the 1996 elections, Israel took another dramatic step toward the Americanization of its political life. On one hand, we had direct elections for the premiership, similar to those held for the U.S. Presidency. On the other hand, there was a marked trend of voting for parties that are actually local pressure groups, much like the common voting patterns for the U.S. Congress.

To bolster my assertion, I suggest that one take a careful look at Prime Minister-designate Binyamin Netanyahu's

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curriculum vitae. Netanyahu is the incarnation of the new Israeli, the essence of the new Israeli whose temple is the Faculty of Business Administration. Netanyahu was born in Israel to an intellectual family. He served in an elite IDF [Israel Defense Forces] unit and went on to study engineering and business administration at one of the most prestigious universities in the United States. Had he not entered politics, Binyamin Netanyahu would undoubtedly have become the chief executive officer and owner of a dynamic high-tech firm, with a factory in the north Tel Aviv industrial park and stocks on Wall Street. Netanyahu would be a regular commuter on the Tel Aviv-New York line, chewing the fat with analysts from large U.S. investment firms, granting interviews to economic magazines, declaring how important the peace process is for foreign investors, and insisting on the need to change the shekel's exchange rate.

Shim'on Peres was and remains a more "Middle Eastern" politician than Binyamin Netanyahu. And, paradoxically, for that very reason — Peres' deep roots in our region — his revolutionary ideas spread horror and fear among the Arab world's traditional Islamic leadership. Peres promulgated a vision of a new Middle East, with Israel as a leading factor in it. Netanyahu conjures up a vision of the modern industrial West, with Israel as a leading player.

Netanyahu, in his way of life, personal and public behavior, preferences, and world outlook, is every inch the politician from Ramat Aviv Gimmel [affluent north Tel Aviv neighborhood], from Rishon Leziyyon's West Park [luxury apartment complex], and not from Yeruham or Or Yehuda [poverty-stricken development towns]. This is true despite the fact that he won a clear majority of the votes in Yeruham and lost decisively in Ramat Aviv Gimmel.

I have spoken with Netanyahu on numerous occasions and read his book. Netanyahu is committed to capitalism, liberalism, a free market economy, and competition. He wants to bring Israel's per capita income up to $20,000 and envisions an ultramodern, computerized society with a highly developed communications infrastructure. This is his cultural target. His goals in the social sphere are even more unequivocal: to privatize whatever he can, to reduce the government's involvement in the economy to a minimum, to lower income tax, and to create conditions for "equal opportunity," a term much in use among right-wing U.S. economists. Binyamin Netanyahu, without any hesitation or reservations, sees Israel joining the ultramodern Western economies. I have the impression that the United States is Netanyahu's second motherland, in the best sense of the word.

Throughout the entire election campaign, I was astounded by the commentators who wrote about Netanyahu with derision, mockery, and condescension, describing him as empty and a man who exploits fear. It isn't true. Netanyahu presented a complex message behind the slogan "Peace with security." He successfully pulled off an ideological revolution in the Likud and brought it to accept the Oslo accords and the peace process. With his own two hands, he led the Likud to adopt more dovish positions than those espoused by Labor five years ago. That is why he won 50.5 percent of the vote. At the same time, he transformed the Likud from a populist social party to a liberal party with a capitalistic outlook.

What I am writing here is not new. I haven't changed my spots. I didn't vote for Netanyahu, but this is exactly what I wrote about Netanyahu in YEDI'OT AHARONOT both two years ago and one week ago. I said that Netanyahu was a very serious politician who aspires to establish a U.S.-style republican party in Israel. I now believe that he will indeed establish this new Israeli party.

What irony and what an electoral success. With the blessing of Rabbi Kaduri and the enthusiastic encouragement of the Habad Movement, Israel elected the most "yuppie," "trendy," American, "business administration," "MTV," and "free market" prime minister possible. Those who most fear the Americanization of Israeli society voted for it in a big way. The prime minister of Ramat Aviv Gimmel swept into office thanks to the votes from Yeruham.

Israel: Industry Leaders Seek Unity Government To Protect Economy

TA0206173096 (Internet) GLOBES in English 2 Jun 96

[Report by Tzvi Lavi, Ora Qoren, Orna Raviv, and Ze'ev Klein]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] [passage omitted] The Association of Chambers of Commerce and the Manufacturers Association have decided to spearhead a move in favour of setting up a national unity government, "which will project economic certainty and stability toward the Israeli economy, foreign investors and international markets". This was stated today by Danny Gillerman, President of the Association of Chambers of Commerce. The decision as to the above initiative was reached by Gillerman and Dan Propper, President of the Manufacturers Association.

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Israel: Kahana Letter Congratulates, Warns Netanyahu

TA0306043296 (Internet) Judean Voice in English 3 Jun 96

[Letter from Binyamin Ze'ev Kahana, leader of the right-wing Kakh movement, to Israeli Prime Minister-elect Netanyahu; date not given]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Dear Mr. Netanyahu,

It is no secret that I was not one of those who placed a lot of stock in the elections in which you were elected as Prime Minister. It is no secret that we see in Likud an "equal partner" in the horrid deterioration of the State of Israel in all areas over these last two decades. Indeed, for this reason, many thought that Likud's fall four years ago and the coming to power of the evil left as a result of Likud's bumbling policy would cause Likud to disappear from the political map. So many thought that the choice the next time around which would stand before the nation would be a clear one — the choice between an extremely un-Jewish state or a Jewish one.

But behold, in spite of it all, God decided to give you and your way the chance to fix the damage you caused. Such being the case, I can only say to you: Binyamin Netanyahu, you have been given a golden opportunity. Go forward and take advantage of it — and save the Jewish people from tragedy! Because your coming to power in itself does not solve anything. In these last two decades, the state of Israel has been like a chariot of horses racing towards the precipice, and such a situation does not make distinctions between Labor and Likud governments. On the contrary, Likud leaders set some pretty awful precedents to exasperate the situation.

In order to halt Israel's calamitous decline, it will not be enough simply discontinuing past policies. You will have to act boldly and assertively to immediately steer the chariot 180 degrees in a different direction.

There is no doubt that the first issue which must grab your immediate attention is the same issue that only by a miracle did not prevent you from becoming Prime Minister in the first place. Obviously, I am referring to the Arab vote. I don't have to tell you how close you were to having your dreams shattered in these elections. It was a matter of an infinitesimal percentage point. You know full well how the Arabs swarmed to the polls against you, in order to help the left. You were too close to losing to possibly ignore this critical matter, Mr. Netanyahu. Surely it was not a coincidence that precisely this subject almost prevented you from becoming Prime Minister. This was a hint to you and your government that you can not possibly continue the defeatist policies of past administrations in refusing to deal with the Arab demographic time bomb which endangers the very existence of the nation. These elections, Mr. Netanyahu, proved that the Arab citizen within the green line is infinitely more dangerous to the existence of Israel than the Arab in the territories.

Mr. Netanyahu, I hope you do not think that we can rely on miracles over and over again, allowing the fate of the Jewish People to hang in the balance, dependent on the Arab vote, all out of some phony "humanism" or fear of "what will the gentile say". Even if the destiny of the nation doesn't worry you, your personal destiny and that of your party should at least awake you from your slumber.

You have many difficult tests ahead of you. They include the disposing of the leftist media, halting the insanity of the Supreme Court, releasing Jewish political prisoners, and canceling the administrative detention arrests against lovers of the Jewish Nation. But without a doubt, your handling of the Arab problem will symbolize in which direction you are headed — towards saving Israel as a Jewish state, or towards it's annihilation; towards saving Jews from terrorist bombings (which did not start with the left, and will not disappear with their departure, but rather with the departure of the Arabs amongst us!) or to a continuation and even an exasperation of terror if you indeed insist on carrying on like your predecessors in the Likud in ignoring the problem.

Remember, Mr. Netanyahu, when my father, Rabbi Me'ir Kahana, (may God Avenge his Blood) raised the issue, your party ignored it. Not only did they ignore it, but due to political fear, even took the lead in the banning of his party. You, in fact, were not involved in that, and I say that to your credit, despite the fact that you, too, have not passed up the opportunity in recent years to condemn and defame us. Obviously, we are willing to let bygones be bygones. But the historical errors your party has made must be corrected. And let us not even mention the cancellation of the obscene decision to declare "Kakh" and "Kahana Hay" as terrorist organizations. This, too, will be one of your tests.

Remember! Many good Jews supported you, only because they wanted to see the fall of the wicked leftist government. The normal, healthy part of the nation pleaded and prayed for your victory, and you owe them a great deal. You owe them that they won't blow up in buses. You owe them hope — hope for a true and secure Jewish state even if it means you must act brazenly and with great courage, something which you often claim to possess.

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Majesty King Husayn, His Excellency President Husni Mubarak, and President Yasir 'Arafat, al-Mu'ashshir announced.

Regarding Jerusalem, Dr. al-Mu'ashshir said: His Majesty King Husayn has always called for a united Jerusalem as a symbol of future peace, under which the followers of all sects can exercise their religious rites in total freedom. He added this is also a Palestinian proposal. Al-Mu'ashshir said that there is nothing new in calling for a united Jerusalem and for free access to it in the sense that Old Jerusalem should not be isolated, as was the case in the past.

On the tripartite summit scheduled to be held in al-'Aqabah tomorrow, Dr. al-Mu'ashshir said: The al-'Aqabah summit will focus on ways to back the Palestinian people and leadership during the upcoming final-status negotiations. We also hope that the summit will work out a mechanism to resume the peace process on all tracks, particularly the Palestinian track.

He said that there is an open invitation for other countries to join the summit, which will work out a joint mechanism to help the Palestinian people, although there are no serious plans so far to expand the summit by attracting other Arab leaders, as the summit was originally designed to support the Palestinian people during the final-status negotiations. We all know that Egypt and Jordan have a special role to play in this issue and that the summit will convene at the request of the Palestinian leadership. But, he added, if any other Arab country wants to participate, it will find the door open.

Turning to Jordanian-Kuwaiti relations, the minister said that these relations are improving; that a Jordanian embassy will be opened in Kuwait in the near future, although no date was set; and that there are no plans for Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti to visit Kuwait.

Concerning the delay in the implementation of the Jordanian-Israeli transportation accord, the information minister said: I have no information about air transportation, but I can say it is delayed as a result of technical rather than security reasons.

Regarding bus movement between the two countries, he said: Two Jordanian and Israeli bus companies are authorized to transport passengers between the two countries. However, the Jordanian company has not yet purchased all the buses its needs for that purpose. When we informed the Israeli side of this, the Israeli company postponed its plans to begin transportation until the Jordanian company purchases the required buses.

Asked about reported commercial and industrial deals between Jordanian and Iraqi factories and merchants outside the Jordanian-Iraqi protocol, Dr. al-Mu'ashshir said: The Jordanian Government does not object to such Jordanian-Iraqi deals, and any Jordanian company can make such deals with Iraq outside the said protocol. By urging a reduction in some deals, we mean the trade protocol under which the Jordanian Government pays the price of the goods exported to Iraq. He also said: There is no connection between the oil-for-food deal and the protocol with Jordan, as this protocol will continue regardless of the deal.

Jordan: Prime Minister Receives Saudi Foreign Minister's Phone Call

JN0406162896 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1100 GMT 4 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti received a telephone call from His Highness Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal, Saudi foreign minister, at noon today. The two sides exchanged viewpoints within the framework of continuous and regular Jordanian-Saudi coordination vis-a-vis the latest developments in the region and the joint steps that should be taken.

In the area of cooperation and coordination with the sisterly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, it was agreed that Saudi Commerce Minister Usamah al-Faqih will arrive in Amman on 12 June to head the Saudi side to the joint ministerial committee.

The prime minister and the Saudi foreign minister expressed eagerness to intensify consultations, particularly at the current stage, and to exert efforts to entrench Arab interests.

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Syria: Bahraini Minister Arrives With Message for al-Asad

JN0406185496 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1515 GMT 4 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Bahraini Education Minister 'Abd-al-'Aziz Muhammad al-Fadil arrived in Damascus this afternoon on a visit to Syria. He was received at Damascus International Airport by Education Minister Muhammad Ghassan al-Halabi and the Bahraini ambassador in Damascus.

In a statement to the SYRIAN ARAB NEWS AGENCY, SANA, al-Fadil expressed great pleasure to visit his second country Syria. He added that he is carrying a message for President Hafiz al-Asad from his brother His Highness Shaykh 'Isa Bin-Salman Al Khalifah, the amir of the State of Bahrain, regarding Syrian-Bahraini relations and the recent developments in the Gulf region.

Syria: Al-Asad Receives Bahraini Education Minister, Letter

JN0406185796 Damascus Syrian Arab Television Network in Arabic 1730 GMT 4 Jun 96

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Translated Text] President Hafiz al-Asad received Bahraini Education Minister 'Abd-al-'Aziz al-Fadil at the Latakia presidential palace at 1800 today. The meeting was attended by Education Minister Muhammad Ghassan al-Halabi and Muhammad Hamad al-Muhaymid, Bahraini ambassador in Damascus. [Video shows close-up and pan shots of al-Asad and al-Fadil sitting together talking and al-Fadil handing al-Asad a letter]

Syria: Al-Asad Underlines 'Concern' for Bahrain's Security

JN0506064296 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0415 GMT 5 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Hafiz al-Asad received Bahraini Education Minister 'Abd-al-'Aziz al-Fadil at the Latakia Presidential Palace yesterday evening. The meeting was attended by Education Minister Muhammad Ghassan al-Halabi and Muhammad Hamad al-Muhaymid, Bahraini ambassador in Damascus.

The Bahraini minister handed a letter to the president from His Highness Shaykh 'Isa Bin-Salman Al Khalifah, the amir of Bahrain. President al-Asad gave the Bahraini minister a letter in reply. The participants in the meeting discussed the situation in the Gulf region. President al-Asad underlined Syria's concern for the security and stability of the fraternal State of Bahrain.

Syria: Envoy Dubs U.S. Reports of Explosions in Syria 'Rumors'

MM0506112396 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 5 Jun 96 pp 1, 4

[Report by Muhammad Sadiq: "Syrian Official Says Washington's Reports of Explosions in Damascus Are Rumors"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Washington — Syrian Ambassador to the United States Walid al-Mu'allim has expressed his astonishment at a statement issued by the State Department yesterday which spoke of explosions in Syria over recent weeks.

Al-Mu'allim told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT that "some circles in the region want to exploit the Turkish-Israeli military agreement and the results of the Israeli elections. So these reports are an attempt to fabricate rumors about Syria, especially after the moves being made by President Hafiz al-Asad and current contacts among the major Arab capitals to define a unified Arab stand to confront the challenges of the stage ahead and to salvage the peace process on the basis of the Madrid conference's foundations."

Ambassador al-Mu'allim went on to say: "It is worth noting that these rumors were started by Turkish journalists and coincided with Netanyahu's and the Likud's assumption of power in Israel."

The U.S. State Department said yesterday that it had received reports of the occurrence of several explosions in Syria over recent weeks, some of which have been confirmed. [passage omitted]

Syria: Al-Shar' Returns From Saudi Arabia 4 Jun

JN0406190996 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1515 GMT 4 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In implementation of the instructions of President Hafiz al-Asad; President Muhammad Husni Mubarak, president of the Arab Republic of Egypt; and King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, the custodian of the two holy mosques and king of Saudi Arabia; two meetings were held in Riyadh yesterday evening and this morning between Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar', Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa, and Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal.

The foreign ministers consulted with each other, exchanged views on the situation in the Arab arena, and assessed the regional developments. At the conclusion of their meeting, the ministers agreed to forward their recommendations and proposals to their leaders.

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Faruq al-Shar' and 'Amr Musa arrived in Riyadh yesterday evening. They were received by Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal, Saudi foreign minister; the Syrian and Egyptian ambassadors to Saudi Arabia; and senior Saudi Foreign Ministry officials.

Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' returned to Damascus this afternoon. He was seen off at Riyadh Airport by Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal, Saudi foreign minister; 'Umar al-Sayyid, Syrian ambassador in Riyadh; and senior Saudi Foreign Ministry officials.

Syria: Radio Says Likud Victory Will 'Further Complicate' Matters

JN0406165196 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1135 GMT 4 Jun 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] At the joint news conference held by Presidents Hafiz al-Asad and Husni Mubarak in Cairo yesterday, His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad said: It is obvious that there are changes involving basic issues in the region. We must make intensive efforts and exchange views and advice. We also need to support each other intensively because the issue of any Arab brother concerns all the Arabs.

In his statements, his excellency the president was referring to the recent regional developments, particularly after the Israeli extremist right wing assumed power and in light of the pan-Arab responsibility which dictates on all Arabs to unite their efforts to face the challenges and go beyond the merely reactionary stage to a stage of Arab action that has all the necessary elements for the realization of the Arab nation's goals and the nonrelinquishment of any of its principles.

The most serious development following the Likud's appearance on the scene is this Likud clinging to the project of Greater Israel. This is why the Likud refuses to relinquish the occupied Arab land and Jerusalem under the pretext that this land is part of the land of Israel as stipulated in the Torah. When the Likud calls for returning to the Madrid conference, it does not do so with the aim of using the Madrid conference as a terms of reference. What it really means is to return to a slogan that was raised by Yitzhaq Shamir, who was the Israeli prime minister when the Madrid conference was convened. He raised the slogan of peace in return for peace. In other words, the Likud wants to completely rule out the land-for-peace principle, thus destroying the U.S. initiative which considered the implementation of Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 as the basis for achieving just and comprehensive peace in the region.

The real identity and the goals of the new Israeli rulers are obvious. They believe that practicing the policy of a powerful Israel will realize a peace that is in line with their own perspective — a perspective that conflicts with international legitimacy principles. This will further complicate the situation in the region and create more tension and dangers.

Voices are being raised around the world warning against the possible consequences of the Likud's assumption of power. These warnings are well founded on the ground. Merely easing these dangers rather than working to circumvent them — particularly by those who made strategic alliances with Israel — will only give the world a misleading idea of the real nature of the Israeli extremist right wing and its antipeace schemes.

In other words, we believe that it is fruitless to wager on a real change in the nature of the Likud. But, we believe that those on the international level who have any influence on the Likud will step up pressure to harness it. It is necessary to point out here that the Likud's policy is to complete the chapters of the Zionist project at the expense of the Arabs and their causes.

Hence, one can realize the significance of the current Syrian-Egyptian move to strengthen the Arab situation and to come up with a unified stand, which proceeds from adherence to the basic pan-Arab principles. One can also realize the importance of what President Hafiz al-Asad stressed; namely, that we have to be vigilant and alert so that we will not be distracted and taken unawares.

Perhaps it might be useful to mention in this context what President Hafiz al-Asad had declared during his previous visit to the Arab Republic of Egypt. He said that Israel is neither ready nor prepared for peace yet. If it were serious in seeking peace, he added, the implementation of the U.S. initiative would not have stumbled. This initiative clashed with Shamir's conditional "yes" and was undermined when it was totally overlooked by the Oslo and Wadi al-'Arabah agreements under the pretext of maintaining Israel's security—a pretext which was introduced to achieve certain gains, despite President Clinton's assertion during his meeting with President Hafiz al-Asad in Damascus that the security of any party should not be at the expense of another.

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Syria: Press Comments on al-Asad-Mubarak Summit, Peace Process

JN0406155796 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0510 GMT 4 Jun 96

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] AL-BA'TH comments on the summit between Presidents Hafiz al-Asad and Muhammad Husni Mubarak in Cairo yesterday. The summit focused on efforts by the two countries to face recent developments and improve the Arab situation.

The newspaper says: The two presidents asserted that the statements of the new Israeli prime minister do not call for optimism. However, it is important to wait for the formation of a new Israeli Government to see its official position on the peace process. The Arab position will be determined in light of this.

AL-BA'TH adds: During their news conference, the two presidents emphasized the need for efforts to find a certain formula that guarantees all Arab rights. Achieving this purpose requires outstanding efforts. In addition, efforts must be made to mend fences so that it will be possible to achieve an Arab position that enables the Arab nation to confront all challenges.

The newspaper says: Presidents al-Asad and Mubarak stressed at their news conference that the Arab nation seeks to achieve a just and comprehensive peace. It has offered a great deal to achieve this purpose. Syria, in particular, wants to establish real peace in the region and is cooperating with all efforts to achieve this objective. This is because a just and comprehensive peace will return land to its owners and provide security and stability for everyone.

AL-THAWRAH comments on the stalemate and dormancy from which the peace process is suffering as a result of Israel's obstructive and intransigent stands. These stands have not allowed the peace process to achieve its objectives.

The newspaper adds: We do not want to pass premature judgment on the fate of the peace process with the return of the Likud to power in Israel. However, we want to stress again that the question is not who rules Israel, but who has the real capability to adhere to the requirements and conditions of peace, as stipulated in the resolutions of international legitimacy.

AL-THAWRAH hopes for a new start that restores confidence in the peace process and removes pessimism and frustration that have prevailed since Israel halted the Maryland negotiations in February. Perhaps, President Clinton's letter to President al-Asad — in which Clinton reasserts U.S. determination to adhere to the objective of a just and comprehensive peace — is a positive sign that boosts hopes for overcoming obstacles and difficulties and launching serious and fruitful talks. This will pave the way for a just, comprehensive, permanent, and firm peace.

The paper concludes: We are now waiting for the steps and decisions to be made by the new Israeli Government regarding the peace process. However, we say in advance that Syria would not bargain away its land and rights and would only accept a just and comprehensive peace.

TISHRIN comments on the need to achieve a unified Arab position, based on vigilance, solidarity, and consultations. This will enable the Arabs to build a joint strategy to face any possible developments. Under the headline "A Unified Position," TISHRIN says: All signs indicate that the Arab nation may face serious challenges. These challenges can only be confronted and defeated by a unified Arab will to preserve and restore Arab rights.

TISHRIN asserts that President Hafiz al-Asad's visit to Egypt was within this context. The important talks he held with President Mubarak reflect the importance of consultations and exchange of views between Arab leaders. The purpose of this is to come up with common pan-Arab views on how to preserve Arab existence and guarantee Arab rights. Leader al-Asad stressed this when he said: I am optimistic, and President Mubarak agrees with me that we are capable of serving our basic issues and achieving their objectives.

TISHRIN says correcting the Arab situation begins by giving precedence to higher pan-Arab interests over any other narrow regional interests. President Hafiz al-Asad said: What we have said aims at creating complete Arab solidarity.

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Afghanistan

Afghanistan: Taleban Launches 'Major Offensive' Southeast of Kabul

BK0106120196 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1100 GMT 1 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In Afghanistan, fighting between Kabul regime troops and Taleban militia is reported to be continuing in the southeast of the capital, Kabul. However, details were not available.

Meanwhile, Kabul regime officials have confirmed the fall of a provincial capital city in central Ghowr region to Taleban militia. The provincial capital city, Charcharan, was taken over by the Taleban after a military commander of Rabbani forces defected to them. Taleban militia moved into Charcharan about a month after taking control of the Ghowr region's three other districts — Sharak, Tulak, and Saghar.

In another development, several Afghan leaders have been invited by Taleban leadership to Kandahar for talks on latest situation arising out of the Hekmatyar-Rabbani agreement on sharing power in Kabul. Those invited include Mowlawi Yunes Khales of Hezb-e Eslami; Mowlawi Mohammad Nabi Mohammadi of Enqilab-e Eslami; Pir Seyyed Gilani; and a former president, Pir Sebghatollah Mojaddedi.

[Hong Kong AFP in English at 0909 GMT on 1 June in a Kabul-datelined report adds: "Five Afghan government soldiers and 25 Taleban fighters were killed Saturday [1 June] in fighting southeast of Kabul following a major offensive by the Islamic militia, the defence ministry here said. A 600-man Taleban force mounted the attacks in the early hours in different sectors of Mosa Ainak district in Lowgar province, about 70 kilometers (44 miles) from here, the ministry said in a statement. A government hill post was captured by the Taleban in the initial thrust, but they were pushed back later, the statement said. It said government jets went into action against the Taleban during the nine-hour battle, pounding the militia with cluster bombs. The defence ministry claimed that the Taleban suffered 25 killed, including a well-known commander, identified as Shah Mohammad Kandahari. The government troops destroyed a Taleban tank and several vehicles, besides capturing 10 AK-47 rifles and four machineguns, the ministry said. The statement said five government troops were killed and 20 injured in the battles.

["It alleged that the Taleban had received military assistance from Pakistan in Saturday's offensive. Pakistan has always denied extending any support to the Taleban and stressed that it sides with no faction in the Afghan conflict.

["'Our troops are well entrenched on the frontline, occupying strategically important posts,' in the embattled area in Lowgar, the defence ministry said."]

Afghanistan: President Rabbani Discusses Situation With Iranian Official

LD0406213796 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 4 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Latest developments in Afghanistan were discussed during a meeting in Kabul this afternoon between 'Ala'eddin Borujerdi, the Islamic Republic of Iran's deputy foreign minister in charge of Asia-Pacific region, and Afghan President Borhanoddin Rabbani.

According to a Central News Unit report, in this meeting Mr Borujerdi expressed Iran's satisfaction at the recent understanding reached by the Afghan Government and Hezb-e Eslami [Islamic Party].

He said: Iran welcomes any move towards attaining peace and tranquillity in Afghanistan and hopes that the incumbent government will be able to reach similar understandings with the other opposition groups and parties.

Borujerdi added: At present, Afghanistan is in dire need of peace and tranquillity more than at any other time and Iran will continue its efforts to achieve this objective.

According to the same report, the Afghan president, in turn, expressed gratitude for Iran's continuous efforts to bring about peace and tranquillity in Afghanistan.

He said: It was through Iran's initiative that negotiations between the government and Hezb-e Eslami were conducted and the existing understanding is the fruit of Iran's efforts.

Mr Rabbani added: The Islamic government of Afghanistan will continue its endeavors to achieve an understanding with the other opposition groups to consolidate the grounds for peace and tranquillity.

Bangladesh

Bangladesh: People Asked To Refrain From Commenting on Army

BK0406155296 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in Bengali 1500 GMT 4 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] All patriotic citizens who do not have any clear idea about Army laws have been urged not to create unnecessary controversy about the recent incidents that took place in the Army and to abstain from passing illogical comments.

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An Inter-Service Public Relations press release issued today [4 June] said statements from different quarters in this regard and about the inquiry commission are being published. The press release added that in the interest of the independence and sovereignty of the country, everybody should abstain from making such statements or comments which can create division or disunity among the Armed Forces — which is the symbol of our national unity.

Bangladesh: Chief Adviser Rejects Rumors of 'Dyarchy' in Government

BK0406132696 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in Bengali 1200 GMT 04 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Chief Adviser Mohammad Habibur Rahman has said that the country is now prepared for the holding of parliamentary elections on 12 June. He said this while talking to the members of the Overseas Correspondents Association of Bangladesh at the International Conference Center in Dhaka today. [4 June] Rahman said that holding of elections in any third world country is a big task and added that the task becomes more difficult if the elections are to be held within only four months. He said that with a view to maintain law and order during the elections, a large number of Bangladesh Rifles personnel, police, and paramilitary forces will be deployed. Apart from this, 40,000 members of the Armed Forces will also be deployed. The chief adviser said it is the duty of everybody, including [words indistinct], government officials and employees, to give all out cooperation to the Election Commission in the holding of the elections. Mr. Rahman rejected any apprehension regarding the holding of elections. Commenting on rumors regarding dyarchy, the chief adviser said that there is only one government in the country.

Bangladesh: Carrying of Firearms During Elections Banned

BK0506030196 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in English 0200 GMT 5 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The government has imposed restrictions on carrying all kinds of firearms by the license holders for preventing misuse of those during the ensuing elections. The restriction will remain effective from the 8th till the 14th of this month. An official handout issued in Dhaka last night says stern action will be taken against the violators of the restriction, and the arms will be confiscated. Members of the law enforcing agencies and security guards engaged in various government, nongovernment, and private organizations and installations will, however, remain outside the purview of the restriction.

India

India: Leaders of United Front Parliamentary Groups Announced

BK0406132396 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 4 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The parliamentary affairs minister, Mr. Ram Vilas Paswan, will be the leader of the United Front parliamentary group in the Lok Sabha as the prime minister, Mr. Deve Gowda, is not a member of any house. This was announced by the Parliament Secretariat in New Delhi today. [4 June] The external affairs minister, Mr. I.K. Gujaral, will be the leader of the Front's parliamentary group in the Rajya Sabha.

Taking charge of the Parliamentary Affairs Ministry this afternoon, Mr. Paswan said a two-day session of the Lok Sabha will begin on Monday. [11 June] The house will adjourn that day after paying tributes to former president, Neelam Sanjiva Reddy. The confidence motion will be debated and put to vote on Tuesday. About the president's address to the joint session, Mr. Paswan said he is in touch with leaders of various political parties and a decision will be taken soon. He said the budget session may be convened in the first or second week of next month.

India: Defense Minister, Officials Speak on Defense Policies

BK0406162496 Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA in English 4 Jun 96 p 7

[Unattributed Report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Defence minister Mulayam Singh Yadav said on Monday [3 June] that the new government would uphold the broad national consensus on security issues, "even though some of us have been critical of them in the past."

"We will not deny that we are having to do something we had criticised while in the Opposition," he admitted at his first Press conference within two hours of assuming office at the South Block.

He visualised no clash since the constituent parties in the government would be working under a common minimum programme.

He saw no contradiction in the security policy towards neighbours and the Samajwadi Party's advocacy of a confederation of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. While there could be lowering of guard on the former, the latter was something for which "we will work hard to create the right atmosphere."

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None of the constituents of the United Front, he said, would like the sub-continent to become the "battle ground for big power rivalry."

Mr Yadav declined to comment on the government's nuclear policy and its attitude to the missile programme. On issues like the Agni missile, he said: "I do not think I need to reply."

According to defence analysts, the pointed refusal to speak about "Agni", India's intermediate range ballistic missile (IRBM), was apparently in the context of a television interview by his predecessor Pramod Mahajan. Mr Mahajan had emphasised, in keeping with the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] poll manifesto, that India would not only develop "Agni," but also deploy it.

In a written statement, Mr Yadav said the government would strive to maintain close defence ties with Russia and countries of the erstwhile socialist bloc. Good relations would be maintained with others as well, he said. National security would have the highest priority. The modernisation programme for the armed forces would continue, "putting money to good and maximum use," to ensure that the "armed forces are better prepared than any adversary," he said.

"There will be no ghotala (corruption) in the defence contracts with me around," he said in response to a question. "We want quality material."

Asked if he would seek to introduce transparency in the procedures involved in defence purchase, he said: "Leave that to us."

A confident but cautious Mr Yadav, first time a Union minister handling a sensitive portfolio, spoke in generalities, leaving the policy announcements only after the government won the confidence vote. For all the technical issues, he left the talking to the top officials flanking him — defence secretary K A Nambiar, defence production secretary Vijay Kapoor and scientific adviser to the defence minister A P J Abdul Kalam.

He turned to officials on specific technical issues. Mr Nambiar announced that a proposal would shortly be readied for the Union cabinet for the terms and conditions for the purchase of the Sukhoi 30 combat aircraft from Russia. These terms, "more or less finalised," had been under negotiation for the last two years.

On the upgradation of MiG 21 aircraft, Mr Nambiar said there was no delay and two aircraft were already in Russia. A team of experts was on its way to Moscow. The deal envisaged 125 aircraft being upgraded at the cost of Rs 1,200 crore in foreign exchange, to be spent over three years.

On the light combat aircraft (LCA), Dr Abdul Kalam announced that with all systems integrated, the aircraft would be ready for flight trials next December. This would have the US GE-404 engine. But the second flight trial in December 1997 would have the indigenous Kaveri engine. "It is one of the priority projects of the defence ministry, Dr Kalam said.

Mr Yadav said the defence budget outlay, now at Rs 25,500 crore, would be enhanced, adding, it was proper to await the annual budget. He also agreed to consider "sympathetically" the defence services' case be for the Pay Commission.

The new defence minister was enthusiastic about defence exports which now stand at Rs 100 crore and are estimated to increase by 25-30 per cent during the current financial year. "Why not export, are we to only import?" he asked.

India: New Finance Minister Presents Economic Program

BK0406161496 Madras THE HINDU in English 4 Jun 96 p 1

[Unattributed Report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Constrained by the absence of the common minimum programme of the United Front Government, the new Finance Minister. Mr. P. Chidambaram, nonetheless gave out a firm commitment today to continue with the tax reforms programme, the policy of attracting capital, both domestic and foreign, and reforming and restructuring the public sector.

Expressing his inability to come out with precise policy prescriptions till the common programme is released, Mr. Chidambaram declined to meet press persons today. Some of those who called on him were handed over a written statement, with the Minister promising to give a more elaborate presentation in the coming days. In his statement, Mr. Chidambaram acknowledged that the mandate of the recent general elections reflected "both the consensus and differences on aspects of economic reforms. I believe that the United Front is committed to reconciling the differences and enlarging the areas of consensus."

Implicitly, the Minister conceded that he would have to work towards a consensus within the United Front to get his policies and programmes through and felt that his contribution to the hammering out of a coalition with the United Front constituent parties in the last three weeks would stand him in good stead in formulating the economic policies of the new Government.

Pending that, Mr. Chidambaram stated categorically that "there is agreement that the economy is basically

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in sound health and the economic indicators point to high growth." This categorical assertion is intended to dispel doubts possibly created by the short-lived BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] Government when the then Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, came out with the statement that the "economic situation was alarming."

Secondly, Mr. Chidambaram emphasised that his policies would reflect some basic themes which include a firm and pragmatic commitment to high growth: a humane and heartfelt commitment of social development, social justice and the alleviation of poverty; fiscal prudence and austerity, continuation of tax reforms; attracting capital, both domestic and foreign, to achieve higher levels of investment; channeling the bulk of new investment into the core and infrastructure sectors: reform and restructuring of public sector enterprises; reforming and opening up of the agriculture sector: continuing the thrust to achieve high export growth: making public services and utilities deliver efficiently and at the lowest cost; targeting subsidies at the really needy and the poor.

The Minister has taken care to point out that "there is consensus among the parties of the United Front as well as among the other two major political parties — the Congress and the BJP — on the elements that I have listed. It is only natural that there will be debate and discussion on the best mode and manner in which the reforms must be attempted. Such debate is only natural and healthy. I will surely gain from such a debate," he added.

Once the common minimum programme of the United Front is made public, there is expectation that the Finance Minister would be in a position to clarify the exact position of the Government on various contentious issues like prioritisation of foreign investment, the question of amending the Indian Patents Act or disinvestment of public sector equity as also the position on private sector entry into telecom and power sectors. The opening up of the insurance sector, permitting consumer goods imports or a continued reduction in customs tariff are some other areas which would require a consensus before Mr. Chidambaram can speak his mind on them.

There have been divergent views amongst the constituents of the Front on these policy aspects and an early clarification on them would signal to the investors and the industrial sector how far the new Government would proceed on the path of economic reforms.

India: Industrial Leaders View PM as Economically 'Liberal and Pro-Reform'

BK0306143396 Madras THE HINDU in English 3 Jun 96 p 11

[Unattributed report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Industry and the investor community is banking heavily on the personality of the new prime minister, Mr. H.D. Deve Gowda and on his track record as the Karnataka chief minister for the economic reforms programme of the past five years to continue uninterrupted.

While mandatory official reactions have been given out by the various chambers of commerce welcoming the new government, a deeper analysis by the industrialists has revealed certain "positive points" in the new Cabinet which have buoyed market sentiments. The first and foremost is the liberal and pro-reform performance of the Deve Gowda government in Karnataka since 1994. The second is the ability of the new prime minister to carry people along with him despite their seemingly disparate viewpoints. The third is the inclusion of people like Mr. P. Chidambaram, Mr. M. Arunachalam, Mr. Murasoli Maran and Mr. I.K. Gujral, into the Cabinet, particularly since all of them have had experience of being in the Union Council of Ministers at the Centre and are expected to manage the key economic portfolios as well as that of external relations. "These people represent a modern outlook and a practical bent of mind. Consequently, one would expect that the reforms programme would continue," said one top official of an apex chamber of commerce.

While a detailed reaction to the government's economic policies has to wait till the common minimum programme of the constituents of the United Front is made public, economists and industrialists have set out three points by which they would evaluate the performance of the new government. First would be the signals that would come out from the new ministers in the next couple of days which might have an immediate impact on investors, both domestic and foreign. Like the announcements of Mr. Jaswant Singh, the finance minister in the short-lived BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] government, it is expected that the new ministers in charge of economic portfolios should be able to clarify the official position on telecom and power policies, on the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in general and patents in particular and on the attitude towards foreign investment, both direct and through portfolio investments. Positive signals on these issues could result in an almost immediate inflow of foreign capital into the country as otherwise there is every possibility of the current

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account deficit coming under renewed strain in the current financial year, the economists feel.

The second expectation from the government is in terms of a commitment to maintain fiscal discipline. Unless the new government makes conscious efforts to rein in the fiscal deficit, the entire economy could be undermined, the economists say. This caution, however, camouflages their concern that there could be pressures on the United Front government to go in for some populists measures like raising food and fertilizer subsidies or neglecting the restructuring the public sector, resulting in a higher draught on budgetary resources.

But above all these is the question of stability of the new government. All commentators repeated the point that the stability of the coalition government has been a major debating point in the last few days and unless the doubts on this score are dispelled, a sense of uncertainty would continue to engulf economic and investment activity in the country. "This is one aspect which is worrisome," confessed many industrialists.

While these were broad macro issues, there are other points on which industry would be looking for action from the government. High on the priority list here is credit squeeze and the consequent high interest rates which is having the effect of choking production and industrial growth. Some quick policy initiatives are also needed to contain import growth and push up the stagnant export growth so as to bring the trade deficit within manageable limits. Above all this, quick and decisive steps are required to pump up the infrastructure which is grossly inadequate to cope even with existing industrial production while the capacity has to be created to take care of the expected expansion in overall economic activity.

India: Growing Clout of Regional Parties Viewed

BK3105130896 Varanasi AJ in Hindi 15 May 96 p 8

[Unattributed Article: "Regionalism Coming To Dominate Nationalism"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Among the very many problems that have surfaced in the wake of the elections for the 11th Lok Sabha, the most noteworthy is the question of federalism. The Telugu Desam Party, Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, and the Akali Dal-Badal group, regardless of their mutual differences, have made their point abundantly clear that the country's structure needs to be changed from a unitary to a federal one. The pertinence of their demand for federalism can be judged from the fact that they have made it an essential condition for their support to any party that will form the new government. Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu has been most vociferous in asserting the regional parties' demand.

This demand has not come out of the blue. It was not unexpected either. In fact, in the elections for the 11th Lok Sabha, regional parties have succeeded in securing a sizable number of seats which will enable them to at least pressure the new government to think about a broad-based federal structure and also, to some extent, to realize their demand.

Practically, the demand for federalism means that the states should be given more rights with central government control being reduced slowly but surely. Under the provisions of the existing Constitution, this can be done only by abrogating Article 356 of the Constitution. Chandrababu Naidu had made this point amply clear during a news conference.

But, why are the regional party leaders so averse to Article 356 of the Indian Constitution? They are opposing it because under the article's provisions, any state government can be dismissed and presidential rule enforced there. The opposition of the regional party leaders to Article 356 is nothing unusual. They have often complained about the widespread misuse of this article by the central government. Using this convenient tool, the central governments arbitrarily sack state governments. This prevents state governments from taking their own initiatives and makes them obeisant to the wishes and whims of the central government.

It is against this backdrop that regional parties have been pressing for the implementation of the Sarkaria Commission recommendations [on center-state relations]. They complain that the central government has placed the Sarkaria Commission's recommendations in cold storage, which is totally inappropriate. They have been demanding the implementation of the commission's recommendations and the granting of greater autonomy. In the light of the results of the 11th Lok Sabha elections, the demand of regional parties for greater autonomy has become all the more significant. Greatly increasing influence in Andhra Pradesh, Punjab, Assam, Haryana, and Tamil Nadu, regional parties are putting immense pressure on the centralized structure of the Indian Union, which is quite natural.

The demand for federalism and greater autonomy has not arisen from political reasons only. Chandrababu Naidu, Karunanidhi, Prakash Singh Badal, Prafulla Kumar Mahanta, and other leaders maintain that the central government has been pursuing an arbitrary and discriminatory financial policy and has not been giving them their due financial rights, which has been hampering the development of the states. Though the state governments have been complaining, the central

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government has not paid any heed to their grievances. Its attitude has mostly been contemptuous.

Political observers seem to differ on the demand to grant more rights to the states. One section of political observers believes that the demand relates to the extensive decentralization of power. They maintain that the decentralization of power is the need of the hour which cannot be put off for long. They believe that the centralization of power hinders regional development, which in turn adversely affects national development. Declaring the demand for the decentralization of financial as well as political powers as legitimate, these political observers seem to widely support the demand of regional parties.

However, other political observers do not agree with this interpretation of the elections results. They do not believe that by helping regional parties win larger number of seats in the recent elections, the country's voters have given their thumbs up to the decentralization of power or greater autonomy to states. There does not appear to be any tangible basis for the belief that voters had this point in mind when they voted for the regional parties. Voter support for regional parties can also be the result of their disenchantment with the ruling party or a group of parties. It can also be considered as an anti-establishment vote, which should not be used as a tool for propagating the cause of regionalism. In the eyes of these observers, giving way to regionalism will encourage divisive and separatist forces, which will not be in the larger interest of the nation.

In view of the lack of consensus on this matter, it would be appropriate to mention the views of yet another section of political observers. These observers believe that the tremendous growth of the regional parties during elections to the 11th Lok Sabha and six state assemblies show that even after the long lapse since independence, we have not been able to solve our national problems. They say India is a multiethnic society, in which the word nationalism is used in the context of a specific region, language, and way of life. They say India is like the former Soviet Union, where people belonging to various nationalities happen to live together. In addition, these observers also believe that discrimination against various nationalities and the bitter feelings associated with it were some of the reasons for the disintegration of the former Soviet Union. With this comparison, they want to bring home the point that the results of elections to the 11th Lok Sabha and six state assemblies reflect the need for urgent solutions to our national problems. According to them, there is no scope for any delay in finding solutions. They claim the country is sitting on a powder keg and if we want to keep this from exploding, we should give up the habit of delaying solving national problems.

There is yet another section of political observers which interprets the grand election success of the regional parties in a completely different way. This section favors extensive decentralization of economic powers but opposes political decentralization under any circumstances. They maintain that in view of the remarkable expansion in the influence of regional parties, any argument for the decentralization of political powers will be absolutely suicidal. In view of these conflicting arguments and scenarios, it is impossible to reach any specific conclusion. In this situation, a section of political observers has started to say that in view of the growing influence of regional parties, the central government should try to win the support of the middle class.

Whatever the truth may be, there is no scope for any doubt now that the elections for the 11th Lok Sabha and six state assemblies have tremendously increased the influence of regional parties, which may have far-reaching consequences. While some political observers say the growth of regional parties may have a negative impact on the national political scenario, others believe it may be good for the country.

India: BJP's Vajpayee Urges Government To Reject Congress Policies

BK0406061996 Delhi Doordarshan Television Network in English 1530 GMT 3 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The former prime minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpyaee, says if the Deve Gowda government continues with the policies of the Congress government, the Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP] will oppose it tooth and nail.

Speaking to newspersons after being accorded a reception in Mumbai [Bombay] today, he said the Deve Gowda government should work on the basis of a broad national consensus. This was Mr. Vajpayee's first press conference after he resigned from prime ministership. Opposing the current policy of economic liberalization, he alleged that this has resulted in a massive spurt in the nation's foreign debt, mounting unemployment, unprecedented rise in corruption, and the widening divide between the rich and the poor.

India: Official—Voting in Kashmir 'Relatively Free and Fair'

BK0406131896 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1230 GMT 4 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The election commission says the recent Lok Sabha polling in Jammu and Kashmir has

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been relatively free and fair. Addressing a press conference in New Delhi, the chief election commissioner, Mr. T.N. Seshan, said that the polling was perhaps the best in the given conditions and despite the determination of the neighboring country to foil the elections. Replying to a question on allegations that the security forces compelled the people living there to cast their votes, Mr. Seshan said no written complaint has been received by the commission.

In the Udhampur parliamentary constituency, the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] candidate, Professor Chaman Lal Gupta, has established a winning lead of over 58,000 votes against his nearest Congress rival, Mr. Janakraj Gupta. The Janata Dal nominee, Mr. Devadas Thakur, is in the third position. Only about 55,000 votes now remain to be counted. Counting of votes in five assembly segments of Anantnag constituency has been completed. It is nearing completion in three other segments. In the remaining eight assembly segments, counting will be taken up after that. The result is expected by this evening.

India: 'At Least' 5 Killed in Explosion Near Calcutta

BK0406155096 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1541 GMT 4 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In West Bengal, at least five persons, including a child and a woman, were killed and several others injured when a three story building collapsed at Baranagar near Calcutta this afternoon. Some more are feared trapped in the debris. According to the municipal affairs minister, Mr. Ashok Bhattacharya, the collapse occurred due to the explosion in a sulfur godown housed in the building. The cause of the explosion is yet to be ascertained. The fire has since been brought under control. The state government has ordered a high-level inquiry into the blast.

India: 'Indigenously Developed Weapons' To Be Mulayam's Immediate Task

BK0306143196 Madras THE HINDU in English 3 Jun 96 p 11

[Report by Atul Aneja]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Mr Mulayam Singh Yadav takes over as the new defence minister at a time when a strong political push is required to equip the officer short armed forces with indigenously developed weapons.

On taking over the reins of the ministry, Mr Yadav will find that the officer corps of the Indian Army and the officer corps of the Indian Army and the Indian Air Force (IAF) is short by 30 per cent, affecting preparedness. Besides, the overstretched forces are confronting fresh challenges. Introduction of hi-technology has imposed new demands on leadership. Officers are also under increasing stress while facing internal disturbances while keeping a watchful eye on human rights.

Mr Yadav takes over when a bold decision has been taken to generate 70 per cent of the weaponry required indigenously, within a 10 year span. This drive is guided by a 10 year Plan-2005, focusing first on key high profile programmes such as the Light Combat Aircraft and the Arjun Main Battle Tank (MBT). The critical hi-technology package generated by these projects will go into making a variety of indigenous arms. "All that the new set up has to do is to back the variety of ongoing projects in the pipeline. If this is done, the Indian Armed Forces will have a formidable new face within a decade," a top defence source said here. Plan-2005 also envisages that indigenously developed weaponry will replace key weapons.

Political backing is also required for other high profile projects. These are the missile programmes in the pipeline including the development of air defence projectiles such as the radar-guided Trishul and Akash. These two weapons, the first which can shoot down low flying targets and the other capable of engaging the high flying ones, need to be urgently inducted in the forces. The electronics of the existing Soviet origin radar guided Pechora and OSA-AK air defence missiles have been compromised, making them vulnerable to jamming by hostile aircraft.

The Prithvi ground-to-ground missile needs to be deployed in large numbers, and the decision on this appears to be still pending. Conversion of Agni from a demonstrator of IRBM [intermediate range ballistic missile] know-how to a deployable missile is still to be taken.

The IAF needs a long range strike aircraft and the highly sophisticated Russian-built SU-30 has already been short listed. But the conversion of the decision "in principle" to a defence contract is still pending. The defence minister will obviously have to take a look at the proposal, before giving his nod.

Some of the other key projects of the IAF will also have to be backed afresh. The modernisation of the MiG-21 with Russian help is yet to be completed and IAF is in the process of finalising the upgradation package of other planes like the deep strike MiG-23 and the MiG-27. This is also likely to be brought before the minister shortly. "The need for vigilance during a period of transition increases greatly. This is the time when vested interests try and scuttle well considered on-going projects," the sources warned.

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The IAF also needs to upgrade a range of the radar guided air defence missiles on the MiG-29 planes. The MiG-29's, the Indian answer to the Pakistani F-16's, may also now have to take on the Mirage-2000-5 which Islamabad may get from Paris. Long distance missiles are needed to shoot down these highly lethal planes before they come into striking range. The IAF also needs new planes, the Advance Jet Trainers (AJTs), to train newly commissioned pilots.

The navy is looking for a new aircraft carrier to replace the aging war-horse Vikrant. But negotiations on acquiring the Soviet origin Admiral Gorshkov have run into rough weather. A cabinet decision on a indigenously designed carrier as a replacement is also yet to be taken. A proposal for a Spanish aircraft carrier is also hanging fire.

The decision on getting the early 1970's origin Foxtrot class submarine is pending. Besides, new frigates in the navy also need to be inducted at a time when arch-foe Pakistan is targeting Indian naval ships with freshly acquired arms.

Iran

Iran: Foreign Ministry Denies Iran Involved in Bahrain Turmoil

LD0506104996 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 0930 GMT 5 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Islamic Republic of Iran Foreign Ministry spokesman has strongly denied that there is any Iranian interference in the internal affairs of other countries, including Bahrain.

Mr. Mohammadi was speaking in response to claims by Bahraini officials about Iranian involvement in a plot to overthrow the government of the shaykhdom. He said such claims are totally unfounded.

He stressed: The Islamic Republic of Iran advises the Bahraini Government to ignore insinuations made by the enemies of Muslim nations. He said these insinuations merely pursue the aim of undermining bilateral relations as well as paving the way for the presence of foreign powers in the region.

It must be noted that almost one week after a visit by the U.S. joint chief of staff to Bahrain, Manama's foreign minister told the representatives of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council that the Bahraini Hizballah organization receives aid and inspiration from Iran.

Immediately after these remarks were made, the U.S. State Department spokesman expressed support for the Bahraini Government and said: Washington takes this claim seriously.

Iran: Bahraini Claims Seen as Result of 'Foreign Provocation'

LD0406132196 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 4 Jun 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Bahraini Government officials accused the Islamic Republic of Iran on 3 June of interfering in Bahrain's domestic affairs.

According to the Central News Bureau, the Bahraini officials have recalled their ambassador to Tehran as a reaction to the issue. They announced that the measure was taken as a protest to the allegations of Bahraini officials regarding Iran's conspiracy to topple the Bahraini Government.

The accusations of the Bahraini officials are rendered right after the dispatch of their representatives to the country members of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council to prepare the grounds for propaganda against the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Reacting to the Bahraini officials' allegations, Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman, as well as rejecting any interference in Bahrain's domestic affairs, reiterated these stances are the results of foreign provocation which will just result in the destruction of ties, preparing the grounds for the presence of foreign powers in the region.

Taking advantage of Bahrain's domestic affairs is a good pretext and motivation for the governments that intend to interfere in the Persian Gulf regional issues. However, the allegations against Iran are not acceptable.

Disturbing peace in any region of the Persian Gulf does not satisfy Tehran's interest. This is why the Bahraini officials should solve their problems by understanding the realities and facts while respecting the Bahraini nations' cause far from creating any controversy.

Without doubt the Bahraini officials are trying to cover the weakness and attract the support of their allies in the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council by accusing the Islamic Republic of Iran. However, as the Foreign Ministry's spokesman reiterated in his comments, the stances are resultant from foreign instigations and foreign influence on Bahraini officials is against the stability and security of the region. It should be noted that propaganda of Bahraini officials is parallel to the propaganda policies of the West against the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The West tries to deviate the public opinion of the regional and Islamic countries from the disputes between

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Arabs and the Zionist regime. Via creating a virtual enemy, the West reduces the political pressure of Arab countries against the Zionist regime.

Iran: Editorial Sees Netanyahu Victory as 'Potential Danger'

LD0406173396 Tehran IRAN NEWS in English 1 Jun 96 p 2

[Editorial: "Netanyahu's Victory a Potential Danger for Islamic Countries"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] All the votes have been tallied in Israel's national election, giving Benjamin Netanyahu a slim lead. Unlike in the past, in Wednesday's [29 May] elections, Israelis cast their votes for members of parliament and also for the post of prime minister for which Netanyahu and Shimon Peres were candidates.

This is the best time to review U.S.-Israeli relations during the administration of President Bill Clinton. The following points are to be considered:

A. Before the Israeli elections, Clinton's support for Peres had sparked charges that the U.S. President was meddling in the Zionist state's politics and internal affairs.

However, the unprecedented mobilization of support by the Clinton administration for Peres came to naught. All that support, including holding last March a summit in Sharm al-Shaykh, defending the Israeli carnage against Lebanese civilians, even putting a pro-Peres spin on the Israeli massacre of innocent civilians at the UN base of Qana, where refugees were huddling for shelter, was unprecedented in U.S.-Israeli cooperation.

The election results also rejected the theory, always proffered by the U.S. officials, that U.S.-Israeli influence peddling and meddling is reciprocal. Now it seems that Netanyahu will have the final and deciding word on Clinton's November elections. This proves that the tail is wagging the dog, since an illegal entity with a population of less than six million will decide the political fate of a nation of 250 million.

B. Jewish extremists were responsible for the assassination of their own Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin, but to cover up the existence of any Jewish extremist groups, the Western media highlighted the activities of Hamas, Hizballah and Islamic Jihad who were fighting for their genuine rights.

The victory of Netanyahu is a victory for extreme religious factions in Israel which manifests Israel's obvious policies of expansionism. This phenomenon is a serious danger to the security and stability of the region.

C. Netanyahu's Likud Party, in its election manifesto, made it clear that it will not return the Golan Heights to Syria and will make all of Jerusalem the capital of Israel. Likud also does not recognize, and intends not to honour, several crucial commitments made to the Palestinian Authority of Yasir 'Arafat in Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

In the light of these developments, it becomes an absolute necessity for all Islamic countries to unite and ward off this common enemy. They should reject the divisive Clinton administration ploy of categorizing the Islamic countries as 'moderates' or 'hardliners'. This White House categorization is meant only to divide the Islamic nations and weaken their unity, making them vulnerable to further Zionist plots.

D. This is the right time for Europe to revise its policy. During the last several months, Europe has been asking Iran to join the Middle East peace process. But now, more than any other time, it has become clear that the Israeli society does not favour peace. It actually voted for hostility, intolerance, expansionism and hatred.

In principle, to accept the peace process under the present circumstances is to accept an imposed peace, a peace which in reality will serve only as the first step towards the next all-out Arab-Israeli war.

Iran: Tehran Cites Weekly on U.S. Causing Afghan 'Tension'

LD0406144196 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Pashto 1230 GMT 4 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] America is very concerned about the expansion of Afghanistan's cooperation with Iran, Russian, and India and considers it against its interests in the region. This point was recently made in a Kabul weekly, ANIS. The newspaper writes that America seeks to block this cooperation by any available means.

Informed political people say that since the victory of the Afghan Islamic revolution and the fall of the communists, America has been the main cause of tension in Afghanistan. America is unashamedly trying to worsen Afghan-Iranian relations.

Iran: Commentary Queries U.S. Activities in Africa

LD0206143596 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1010 GMT 2 Jun 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] After last week's fighting between the Ugandan Government and rebel [forces], the

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Sudanese Army authorities are now reporting that the clashes have extended to the common borders of the two countries and one of the southern Sudanese cities has been bombarded. At the same time the Sudanese press reports speak of the Ugandan and Sudanese forces coming face to face and consider the shelling of the Sudanese positions to be a response to Sudan's support for the [Ugandan] rebels. That is the same stance taken by the Sudanese military spokesman. He considered that to be a pretext to invade Sudanese territory and warned Kampala against Ugandan forces advancing into Sudan. Of course, none of the Sudanese officials has referred to the U.S. assistant Secretary of State's visit to Uganda and his special missions. Also, they have not shown any reaction towards Washington's new efforts in eastern and central Africa.

Nevertheless, there is no doubt that the recent military activities by Uganda on Sudan's southern borders have exacerbated the pressures in that area which result from rebel activities. These activities face the Khartoum government with difficulties in its efforts to establish calm and peace inside the country. Although the Sudanese Government has paved the ground for an understanding with the southern opposition groups by adopting new measures, the head of the Sudanese negotiating team with the southern rebels acknowledges that Khartoum has announced its readiness to hold a referendum about autonomy in the south and has spoken about drawing up a charter for that purpose.

In any case, exertion of military pressure from Sudan's southern borders can threaten the peaceful process and the process of establishing an understanding in that area and bring about the grounds for the implementation of U.S. conspiracies against Islamic movements in eastern and central Africa. Just as has been the case on Sudan's southern borders with support from the United States and the Zionist region but in a different way. In fact, it is because of that fact that the Sudanese Muslims and their neighbors have been viewing recent U.S. activities in eastern and southern African states with suspicion. They believe that besides intensifying rivalries between Europe and the United States, they have new and as yet undiscovered aspects.

Iran: Spokesman Denounces GCC Statement on Iran-UAE Dispute

LD0306092896 Tehran IRNA in English 0914 GMT 3 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, June 3, IRNA — The Islamic Republic of Iran castigated the stance taken by foreign ministers of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (PGCC) on the existing difference between the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Iran, and said the measure aimed to sow discord between the two Muslim states.

The Foreign Ministry spokesman, Mahmud Mohammadi, termed the content of the statement issued by the PGCC as interference in Iran's domestic affairs and as a factor further complicating the issue. He reiterated that such statements only serve interests of big powers.

As to the claim that Iran's military might is a threat to the regional peace and security, he said the U.S. which is paving the way for the Zionist domination in the Middle East region, is the main threat to Muslim nations of the region. The regional states should not allow their stability and security be exposed to conspiracies of the enemies of Islam who are determined to divert the Muslim public opinions from the real threat. "We consider the PGCC statement as a political concession to the new Zionist government," he said.

The statement only justifies military presence of the U.S. in the region as well as using territories of a number of regional Arab states for this purpose, he stressed.

Dismissing the claim alleging Iran's interference in domestic affairs of the regional Arab states, Mohammadi said that forging friendly relations with the neighboring countries, cooperation to provide security and stability in the Persian Gulf and clearing the Middle East region from weapons of mass destruction are among principle policies of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The illogical stands against the Islamic Republic are adopted at a time when the interests of the Muslim nations in the whole region are subject to the Zionist plots and the wounds of the latest Israeli crimes against Lebanese Muslims have not healed yet.

Denouncing the position taken by the PGCC foreign ministers against the Iranian islands, the Foreign Ministry spokesman reiterated that the Greater and Lesser Tunbs and Abu Musa islands are inseparable parts of Iran. The Islamic Republic's stand on opening dialog to remove the existing difference between Iran and the UAE is based on the 1971 accord as well as on the letter of the UAE Shaykh Zayid Bin-Sultan Al Nuhayyan to President Akbar Hashemi- Rafsanajani, he underlined.

The Muslims, now more than any other time, are in need of unity and solidarity, Mohammadi said adding that inability of Arab governments to retake the occupied lands from the Zionist regime is a proof to the lack of such unity among the regional states.

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Iran: Velayati Meets UAE Ambassador With Message From President

LD0206175096 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 2 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Mr. Muhammad Ahmad Abu Rahimah, the UAE ambassador, met Mr. 'Ali Akbar Velayati, our country's foreign minister, today and handed to him a written message from Shaykh Zayid Bin-Sultan Al Nuhayyan, the head of the UAE Government, to President Hashemi-Rafsanjani.

Mutual ties and regional developments were discussed at the meeting. Mr. Velayati praised the UAE for its positive stand in condemning the Israeli attacks on Lebanon. Referring to the long-standing ties between the two countries he said: The ties between the two countries should always be based on friendship and good-neighborly relations.

He added: The two countries should resolve disputes through direct talks and without interference by others.

Iran: Oman Ready for Cooperation in Science, Research

LD0406142996 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0930 GMT 4 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The message of 'Ali Akbar Velayati, our country's foreign minister, was submitted to the Omani minister of state for foreign affairs [Yusuf Bin-'Alawi Bin-'Abdallah].

According to the Central News Unit, at a meeting in Muscat between Yusuf Bin-'Alawi [Bin-'Abdallah] and 'Abbas Maleki, our country's deputy foreign minister for education and research affairs, the Omani minister of state for foreign affairs described relations between the two countries as very good and said that his country was prepared to cooperate with Iran in the fields of science and research.

Iran: Foreign Ministry Envoy Meets Omani Deputy Premier

LD0406214696 Tehran IRNA in English 1703 GMT 4 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jun 4 (IRNA) — Foreign ministry envoy of Iran, 'Abbas Maleki, on Tuesday met with Fahd Bin-Mahmud, deputy of [Omani] Sultan Qabus Bin-Sa'id, and indicated Iran's interest in talks for promotion of their mutual interests.

The official of Oman welcomed closer relations between Iran and the Sultanate of Oman. They also discussed current regional affairs.

The official of Oman said that the government of Oman was fully convinced that Iran was absolutely no threat to Oman, and that the Islaic Republic advocated total peace in the region.

The Iranian official also met with chancellor of Sultan Qabus University and reviewed outlooks for academic cooperation between Iran and Oman.

Iran: Velayati Meets Jordanian Ambassasdor

LD0206173596 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 2 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Mr. Nuh 'Ali Salman al-Qusus, the Jordanian ambassador in Tehran, met Mr. 'Ali Akbar Velayati this afternoon and handed to our country's foreign minister a written message from Mr. 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti, the Jordanian prime minister and foreign minister.

At the meeting the Jordanian ambassador expressed his country's desire to expand its relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran, particularly in higher education, the exchange of lecturers and students, giving university grants, the inception of air lines, and tourist and pilgrimage trips by the citizens of the two countries.

Mr. Velayati stressed the need to expand mutual ties in various fields.

Iran: Velayati Meets Visiting Guinean Planning Minister

LD0206171896 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 2 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Mutual ties, the latest developments in the region, and cooperation between the two countries in industries, mines and commerce were discussed at a meeting today between the Guinean planning and cooperation minister and Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati.

At the meeting, Mr. Michekl Kamano praised the Islamic Republic of Iran for its stand regarding his country in the recent session of the Organization of Islamic Conference [OIC] foreign ministers, calling it a good sign of good cooperation between two Muslim countries.

Referring to the need for more cooperation between the two countries in various fields, Mr. Velayati said the holding of three exhibitions in Guinea by country was a suitable beginning to the ties between the two countries.

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Iran: Weekly — Iran Gains $450 Million Surplus From Higher Oil Prices

LD0306131796 Tehran IRNA in English 1247 GMT 3 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] London, June 3, IRNA — PETROLEUM ARGUS has estimated that Iran has amassed $450 million surplus from higher oil prices in the current fiscal year starting march 21.

It calculated that crude exports from Khark Island have averaged $18.50 per barrel over the past two months compared with a budget price of only $15.50 per barrel. The weekly also said that imports had been contained and domestic product prices recently raised to limit consumption.

Last year, Iran's oil revenues were estimated to have reached nearly $16 billion, some $1.6 bn over target, based upon the equally conservative figure of $15 pb.

Iran: Khamene'i Hints at Change in Future Government Leadership

LD0406211096 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0930 GMT 1 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Fifth Term of the Islamic Majles began this morning with a message by the esteemed leader of the Islamic revolution, His Eminence Ayatollah Khamene'i.

According to a report by the Central News Unit, at a special ceremony in the Majles, the head of the esteemed leader's bureau, Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin [Mohammad] Mohammadi-Golpayegani, read out the message of the illustrious leader. The text of the message is as follows:

[Read by announcer] In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. [passage omitted]

The Majles, in accordance with its essence, enjoys a close and important relationship with the government. Proper adjustment of this relationship is one of the most significant tasks of the honorable Majles deputies.

The first task of the Majles is to pass laws, which will oblige and enable the government to administer properly the affairs of the state. And the Majles should also supervize the implementation of these laws through legal channels. This task requires cooperation and harmony between the Majles and the government and can be fulfilled through Majles support for the government. The health of this relationship should be preserved in such a manner as to convince the government to view the Majles as the body which unravels complicated matters.

The Islamic Majles should always perform its duties very carefully and very prudently, both under the existing situation — when the government is serving the nation under the chairmanship of one of the outstanding friends of the late Imam [Khomeyni] and one of the illustrious personalities of the revolution [President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani] — and also under the next government, when the burden of responsibility for running the state will, with divine succour and guidance, be shouldered by another prominent and elected personality, to enable the government and the Majles to resolve the people's problems and to move the country forwards. [passage omitted]

Iran: Majles Deputy Responds to Criticism

LD3105174496 Tehran RESALAT in Persian 23 May 96 p 6

[From the "On the Fringes of the Majles" column: "Gharibani's Explanations"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The remarks made by Mr. ['Ali Mohammad] Gharibani, Majles deputy for Ardebil, on Sunday [19 May] brought some reaction from deputies and newspaper reporters in the Majles. The objection of Ansar-e Hezbollah, voiced in the form of a protest march, the speech by the deputy for Tehran and the criticism published in newspapers resulted in Gharibani withdrawing his previous remarks.

In a note handed to the Majles speaker ['Ali-Akbar Nateq-Nuri], he pointed out: I ask that a neutral group be set up to count the voided votes in Ardebil to see how many votes I received. He had previously said: Although my eligibility was rejected in the recent Majles election, 140,000 people in Ardebil voted for me. For that claim he had been criticized by the deputies, including [deputy for Lenjan] Mr. [Mohsen] Kuhkan-Rizi.

About insulting Ansar-e Hezbollah he said: Certain people have made it up to stir things and take advantage of the situation for their own political ends. I, myself, am a Basiji and come from a family of martyrs.

Although, in his letter, Gharibani has tried to give some explanation to reduce the reaction and objections of Ansar-e Hezbollah, he has not made it clear who he means when referring to a group of hooligans who remind us of Sha'ban Bimokh [Sha'ban the Brainless, one of the Shah's strongmen].

The next open session of the Majles will be held on Saturday. [25 May] Previously, the Majles was to hold only one more open session for the dissolution ceremony. But since the investigative report on the Foundation for the War Disabled was not complete and also the investigative report on the five-year performance of the Central

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Bank is ready to be read out, with the approval of the deputies, the Majles will hold an open session on Saturday.

Iran: Deputies Polled on Future Majles Speaker

LD3105174696 Tehran ABRAR in Persian 29 May 96 p 1,2

[Unattributed report: "Who Will Be the Speaker of the Fifth Majles?"]

[FBIS Translated Text] With the opening of the fifth Majles approaching, several deputies participated in an opinion poll on the possible Majles speaker and intellectual factions.

Members of various intellectual groups were questioned for this poll and most believed that Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin 'Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri and Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin 'Abdollah Nuri have the best chance of becoming speaker.

Engineer Mohammad Reza Bahonar told the parliamentary correspondent of ABRAR that 'Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri would receive two-thirds of the votes for the post.

Referring to a possible coalition between the "groups following the line of the imam" and the "Servants of Construction," he said: Even if this coalition took shape it would fail to influence a change in the post of speaker. They might only take several posts as the heads of the parliamentary committees.

Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin 'Ali Movahhedi-Savoji also said that Nateq-Nuri, a member of the Militant Clergy Association, has the best chance of becoming the next speaker.

Reasons for this prediction, he said, were his record of struggle, experience, ability to manage the Majles, impartiality, cooperation, and good relations with various intellectual groups.

He said: Even if there was a coalition between "imam's line" and the "Servants," Hojjat ol-Eslam 'Abdollah Nuri would have no chance of taking the post.

Gholam Reza Ansari stressed the need for maintaining a balance between the intellectual groups in the Majles and said: "imam's line" and "Servants of Construction" received the majority of votes for the Majles and, therefore, Hojjat ol-Eslam 'Abdollah Nuri would become the next speaker.

He also said: No political faction has an absolute majority and a political balance is clearly visible. It is hoped that we will witness the institutionalization of political groups and an opening of the economic climate during the fifth Majles.

Abolfazl Rabi'i told our correspondent: It is not yet possible to have an analysis of the views held by the new deputies because some of them believe in coordination and cooperation with certain intellectual factions. However, it is never possible to express a definite opinion about social and political issues because a series of events could change the situation.

He said that Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin 'Abdollah Nuri was a good, pious, and able individual but it was not clear if the Majles would support him.

Mohammad Salamati, general secretary of the Organization of the Mojahedin of the Islamic Revolution, said: It is not yet possible to predict which faction will win the post of speaker. But I think the future speaker will not be from the majority faction. If he is, it will be by a small margin. The line-up of forces and their association with the factions is not yet clear.

Iran: Daily Reminds Majles To Be Aware of Responsibilities

LD0206105896 Tehran IRNA in English 0804 GMT 2 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, June 2, IRNA — Lawmakers shoulder crucial responsibilities and they should keep in mind the reminder of the leader, Ayatollah 'Ali Khamene'i, that deputies should pay greater attention to the ideals and aspirations of the Islamic Revolution, an English daily wrote Sunday, commenting on the opening Saturday [1 June] of the fifth Majles.

"The legislative body plays a key role in the entire democratic process, which is a necessity in any country expecting respect in international society," 'IRAN NEWS' stressed.

While acknowledging that Majles deputies are fully cognizant of their responsibilities, it underscored a few points that MPs have to bear in mind, naming national unity as being most important and is to be preserved along with the country's overall development.

It also highlighted the implementation of laws in the interest of the people, as well as the supervision of the national budget, saying that not a single rial should be allowed to go to waste and should be invested for the improvement of the common lot.

Stressing that no room would be left for corruption if national wealth was spent in a proper manner and recalling the unprecedented sacrifices made by the Iranian nation for the revolution, the daily concluded by saying, "This nation will not tolerate any sloppiness and carelessness from any side of the government, and for that, the legislative body shoulders the most crucial responsibility."

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Iran: Daily Says Fifth Majles Faces 'Serious Challenges Ahead'

LD0206112196 Tehran IRNA in English 0836 GMT 2 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, June 2, IRNA — The fifth Majles is facing serious challenges ahead and is expected to be controversial as it is composed of different factions and tendencies, an English daily commented Sunday.

The 'KAYHAN INTERNATIONAL' said the role of the "undecided" or those deputies with no particular political tendencies, would be crucial in the new parliament as their support could strengthen the rival Jame-e Rowhaniyat-e Mobarez (JRM) group or the Kargozaran-e Sazandegi (G-6).

While political observers note that both factions will get their share of undecideds and that the JRM will maintain a relative majority in the Majles, however, the article added, "one thing is certain, the JRM will not have the power to easily approve or reject proposals and bills...and the faction will not be able to keep parliament under its control."

Stressing that the behavior and activities of the new parliament would also be important in the presidential elections to be held next year, it concluded, "the new parliament is more controversial with the participation of different tendencies and faces serious challenges ahead."

Iran: Rafsanjani, Others Attend Opening of Fifth Term of Majles

LD0106074596 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0630 GMT 1 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The fifth term of the Islamic Majles was opened this morning during a ceremony with the participation of President Hashemi-Rafsanjani, the head of the judiciary branch, and members of the Guardian Council and the Cabinet.

After a recitation of verses from the holy Koran, a message addressed to the Majles from His Eminence Ayatollah Khamene'i, the great leader of the revolution, was read out.

Then the deputies performed the oath-taking ceremonies and signed the text of the oath.

President Hashemi-Rafsanjani delivered a speech at the first session of the fifth term of the Islamic Majles, stressing the importance of the Majles in the Islamic system. He expressed the hope that during this term the elected deputies will take firm steps toward the country's development by relying on the fact that they enjoy the support and trust of the people. [passage omitted]

Two hundred and forty nine deputies are present for the fifth Majles term, which officially began its work today. The elections for the remaining 21 deputies will be held during mid-term elections, due next fall.

Iran: Kurdish Officials Hope To Extend Tenure of Parliament

LD0206205496 Tehran IRNA in English 2039 GMT 2 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, June 2, IRNA — Members of the political bureau of democratic party and of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan Sami Abdulrahman and Fo'ad Ma'ssoum expressed hope that the tenure of the Kurdish parliament would be extended for another year. The tenure of the parliament is to expire in less than 24 hours and will be dissolved if no agreement for its extension is reached.

Talks are under way between Kurdish parties for extending the tenure of the parliament.

Sami Abdulrahman expressed hope here today that the parties would agree on the extension of the parliament's tenure in the coming hours.

Abdolrahman said absence of an agreement on that would pose threats to the Kurds.

The two Kurdish officials are in Tehran along with representatives of another 19 Kurdish parties and of Kurdish groups on the occasion of Imam Khomeyni's death anniversary.

Iran: Iraqi Kurdistan Parliament Extended for 3 Months

LD0406093296 Tehran IRNA in English 0714 GMT 4 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, June 4, IRNA — The self-declared parliament of Iraq's Kurdistan, stationed in Irbil, was extended for another three months upon an agreement reached between various groups and parties in the region.

The decision was made after several rounds of talks in an impartial area located between Irbil and Salah ad-Din, both in Iraq's Kurdistan.

According to sources close to leader of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) Jalal Talebani, the Union and the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) of Iraq have agreeded that 35 seats of the parliament would be alloted

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to the PUK, 35 to the KDP, five to the Assyrians and the remaining 30 seats to the other regional parties.

Since 1991 that the 105-member parliament was formed, except for the five seats earmarked for the Assyrians, the parliamentary seats were equally divided between the KDP and PUK.

During the recent talks, the Union insisted on a change in the distribution of the seats and participation of other parties in the parliament, while the KDP favored preservation of the present condition and temporary extention of the parliament.

The two major parties in Iraqi Kurdistan have been at odds on the distribution of the seats of the Kurdish parliament during the past five years and several bloody wars have occured in this connection.

The local parliament of Iraqi Kurdistan, which was extended last year for a period of one year, held only one session over the past year.

Iran: Editorial Urges MPs To Honor Election Promises

LD0406163896 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 1 May 96 p 2

[Editorial: "Fifth Majles — MPs Should Honor Election Promises"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The first session of the Fifth Majles will convene on Saturday [1st June].

Majles enjoys a high status in the Islamic Republic of Iran. The founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the late Imam Khomeyni, called it the "Essence of the Nation." It is truly the essence of the nation, for, all policies in the republic are scrutinized by the Majles.

During the election campaigns, three major trends appeared to be the main contenders in the political landscape of Iran: Jame'eh-ye Ruhaniyat-e Mobarez (JRM) [Militant Clergy Association], Kargozaran-e Sazandegi [Servants of Construction — reformist faction of Iranian officials around President Rafsanjani], and the leftists.

Though the combination of forces of the Fifth Majles is not definitely clear, Kargozaran-e Sazandegi and the JRM are the two major forces in the Majles.

Although none of the three contenders is a well-knitted, organized political party, each group has entered the Majles on the basis of a few election slogans.

On the basis of what may be termed the platform of the two main contenders, the major difference between the two appears to be the question of social justice and development.

While the JRM states that development without paying proper attention to the question of social justice is not consistent with the ideals of the Islamic revolution, Kargozaran-e Sazandegi believes that socio-economic development of the country will, in the long-run guarantee social justice.

What the nation expects from the two groups in the Fifth Majles are: avoid ambiguity; clarify your plans for achieving the goals of social justice and socio-economic development; and form political parties to increase the accountability of your group.

Besides the issue of social justice, the JRM candidates have entered the Fifth Majles on the election slogan of "supporting President Rafsanjani, and obedience to the leader."

President Rafsanjani, as Hojjat ol-Eslam Reyshahri said a couple of days ago, is one of the main pillars of the Islamic Revolution. The MPs of the Fifth Majles should not forget that any attempt to weaken President Rafsanjani is a betrayal of the voters and an instance of disobedience to the leader.

Iran: Rafsanjani Marks Anniversary of Khomeyni's Death

LD0306084296 Tehran IRNA in English 0543 GMT 3 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, June 3, IRNA — President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani here last night condoled Iranian Muslim nation and Muslims throughout the world on the seventh anniversary of the demise of the father of the Islamic revolution, Imam Khomeyni.

President Rafsanjani, who was speaking to a large number of mourners, gathered at Imam Khomeyni's mausoleum in southern Tehran, said that participation of huge number of people at the commemoration ceremonies was a sign of their loyalty and respect for the Islamic revolution and the lofty aspirations of the late Imam.

The president said that the analysts consider the present situation in Iran as a new phenomenon and a divine blessing.

Referring to the firm bonds of the people with the late Imam and his ideals, the president said such relations could not be understood easily by everyone.

President Rafsanjani said that the great move initiated by the late Imam and the far-reaching impact of the late leader's movement was so immense and deep that it impressed hearts of all freedom loving people around the globe.

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More on Imam Khomeyni's movement, the president said that the late founder of the Islamic republic rescued Iran, which under the former regime was a stronghold of blasphemy and imperialism and a center for suppression of nations, from the shackles of dependence and domination of oppressors.

Imam Khomeyni succeeded in presenting Islam as a constructive and powerful movement for guiding and running of societies.

The president added that despite plots and conspiracies by the enemies of the Islamic revolution to prevent spread of Imam Khomeyni's aspirations, today followers of the late Imam have come to Iran from all over the world to pay tribute to this great personality of the century,

He added that vigilance of the Iranian nation to safeguard the achievements of the revolution and ideals of the late Imam is an outcome of the deep commitment of the people to the late founder of the Islamic republic.

Elsewhere in his address the president said that all the world's oppressed have pined their hopes on the Islamic republic and have established solid bonds with the late Imam.

President Rafsanjani stressed that the thoughts of the late Imam are now as illuminating as they were seven years ago, are held dearly by all Iranians and remain the guiding torch of the revolutionary government and nation of Iran.

Iran: Reyshahri Hails 'Massive' Turnout at Khomeyni Ceremony

LD0306145396 Tehran IRNA in English 0943 GMT 3 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, June 3, IRNA — Hojjat ol-Eslam Mohammad Mohammadi Reyshahri said here Monday morning that the number of mourners who attended the commemoration ceremonies of the late Imam Khomeyni this year was more than those in the previous years. Hojjat ol-Eslam Reyshahri, speaking to IRNA correspondent at the mausoleum, where special commemoration ceremonies were held on the seventh anniversary of the demise of the late imam, added that the massive participation of the Iranian nation this year can only be compared to that of the first anniversary.

This, he said, indicates the people's love and respect for the founder of the Islamic Republic and his ideals. The Iranian nation has proved that they follow the teachings of the late Imam Khomeyni very closely, he added.

Meanwhile, Hojjat ol-Eslam Hasan Khomeyni, the grandson of the late Imam Khomeyni, thanked the Muslim nation of Iran for their massive participation in the commemoration ceremonies.

Iran: GOZARESH on Optimizing Numbers, Statistics

96LA0218A Tehran GOZARESH in Persian No 58, Nov-Dec 95 pp 49-51

[Article by Mohammad Heydari; all ellipses in the original]

[FBIS Translated Text] **Observations on the Periphery of the Economy and Society**

In the old days, when dyes were made from the roots of plants, lapis lazuli stones, or other natural elements, before industrial dyes had come to the market...

At a time when even the most advanced accounting offices and the most distinguished state accountants used the abacus and, because the science of mathematics had not yet made sufficient progress, their largest number was a "korur," that is, 500,000...

In the days when it was impossible for an Iranian to be honored to eat soup made with imported frozen meat...

In short..., in the centuries and ages before we had become civilized, our forefathers did things and said things that seemed strange and even stupid (and still do). For instance, we have read in the narrated stories that one day (or perhaps one night), one person had told another: I have counted the stars in the sky...we have a total of three "korurs" and 99,999 stars. If you do not believe it, go and count them yourself.

Or, as stated in reliable historical texts, one day the well-known Mullah Nasreddin said to those around him: Where I am standing is the center of the earth, and when he faced the objections of his audience, he said, "If you do not believe it, go and measure it yourselves."

In that age of backwardness, when to dye a sparrow, you would have to get several grams of canary yellow dye, the most advanced tool of accounting and planning was an abacus, and people had to buy a few ounces of meat from the neighborhood butcher to make soup for lunch, because they did not have refrigerators and freezers, do you see what genius our forefathers displayed in offering statistics?

The statistical methods of our forefathers were so well documented and their statistical logic was so strong that it would disarm the most daring of skeptics, let alone anyone who would be bold enough to question the figures and statistics they offered.

For instance, imagine Bohlul, who is considered a genius of his own time, as an inhabitant of the village

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of Darquzabad of Poshtkuh. Some members of the village council, to bring joy and entertain the villagers, would ask Bohlul to present some statistics regarding the progress and advances of the village. In order to comply with their request, Bohlul would request that the drum be played to call the people to the village square and then would announce eloquently:

Honorable citizens of Darquzabad of Poshtkuh, blessed by the initiatives of the members of the village council and their around the clock efforts, this year, from our village, 1,000 mans [3,000 kg] of Kermanshahi ghee was exported to Rome; 100,000 mans of autumn wheat to China; 200,000 terra cotta pots to Indochina; 400,000 yards of cloth to India; 800,000 tons of whey to Damascus; 1.6 million tons of wool to Egypt; and 3.2 million heads of cows, sheep, and goats to Baghdad. As you see yourselves, all the inhabitants of the village live affluently, and all are eligible for the Haj pilgrimage.

Suppose someone in the village, a nosy person like myself, were to ask: "Honorable Bohlul, do you not think that you are exaggerating a bit?"

You probably think that the honorable Bohlul would back off and be embarrassed.... No, he would immediately assume a posture of indignation and say:

You have doubts, my dear? ...Well, if you do, go get on your donkey and catch up with the caravans that are carrying our merchandise and count and measure them to realize whether or not I am exaggerating.

Considering our bright national history in the area of statistics, and at a time when totally automatic lines of chemical dye production industries can produce dozens of tons of canary yellow dye every hour, and we have bought computers with 160 mhz of power and speed, and most importantly, we have educated people who, instead of studying in traditional schoolhouses, have graduated from Harvard, MIT, Yale, UCLA, Oxford, Cambridge, the Sorbonne, and the like, it is embarrassing for our statistical methods to be more backward than those of the past.

At the beginning of this year, the honorable Public Relations Office of Mobarakeh Steel announced: The production of steel bullion in the Mobarakeh Steel Complex reached 1,475,000 tons last year, which compared to the previous year marked an increase of about 50 percent.

If the national traditions, along with the optimistic use of canary yellow dye and the power of computers, are put to the best use, the report should have been published as follows: The production of steel bullion in the Mobarakeh Steel Complex reached 10,475,000 tons, which marked an increase of about 500 percent compared to the previous year.

The only difference between the second and the first report is a zero, and zero means nothing. Hence, if we had published the report in this form, nothing would have happened. Did anyone protest when the first report was published? Did even one of the people who had worn out seven pairs of iron shoes to procure one kg of steel bullion at the government price protest the statistics? Besides, if he had, could we not suggest to him that in order for the correctness of the statistics to be proven to him, he could go and stand at the end of the production line of Mobarakeh Steel and personally weigh the steel bullion?

Another instance:

Late in Farvardin this year [mid-April], the deputy minister of commerce in the inauguration of the sixth specialized exhibition of detergents said: "The level of export of detergents last year was more than $20 million, which shows an increase of about 130 percent compared to 1372 [21 March 1993-20 March 1994]."

If a zero were placed after $20 and another after 130, and the price of exported detergents would have been $200 million and its growth 1,300 percent, who do you think would have protested, especially at a time when everyone who needed detergent, to find one box of hand-washing or machine-washing detergent, would have to go between local and employees cooperatives or Qods, Sepah, and city and village stores or would not have the chance to read the statistics at all, or if he would read the report, it would not make any difference to him whether we had exported $20 million worth of detergent or $200 million?

Anemic and unsubstantiated presentation of statistics does not stop with these two cases.

For example, the deputy minister of construction jihad announced in an interview that the value of the export of livestock in 1374 [21 March 1995-20 March 1996] will reach $110 million. If he had said 1,100 million instead of 110 million, would any of these people who are stuck with the frozen meat coupons come and protest why there is an additional zero?

When the general director of government publicity on 22/09/1373 [13 December 1994], instead of saying 77 percent of the people in Iran read newspapers, says that 33 percent of the people do not read the newspapers, do you expect the related Public Relations Office to announce the statistics on the catch of fish in Mazandaran instead of 15,400 tons at 15,400,000 tons, so that the figure will be captivating?

I do not know precisely the criteria for evaluation by the government directors and employees, but what I am certain of is that the method of optimization of

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the figures plays the least role in such evaluations. Otherwise, the method of statistics given by many senior government employees should be similar to the statistical methods of the Social Security Organization; the Ministry of Post, Telegraph, and Telephone; and several other ministries and institutions.

Whenever our revered brother, Mr. Mehdi Karbasian, the general director of the Social Security Organization, has an interview, he expresses the number of those who benefit from the social insurance coverage with such glory and magnificence and describes the variety of services of his organization so eloquently that no doubt remains for the skeptics either that the most advanced counties must come and use the model of the Iranian Social Security Organization or that all the insured people in the developed and semi-developed countries envy the Iranian insured people.

Now, what would be the effect of a few people here or there making a complaint? I swear, none.

Perhaps those who are cautious in using statistics and figures suffer from the illusion that the press might scrutinize the matter and object to the figures, statistics, and promises given.

Such caution is unwarranted. If you have any doubt, I will give you a few examples.

Last year, Brother Akhundi, the minister of housing and urban development, announced in the press festival that land and loans would be offered for housing the homeless press people. The press people published this report enthusiastically and expressed their gratitude to the minister.

After the festival, giving land was forgotten, as well as loans. But did you read one line of protest or even one sentence as a reminder in the press?

Another instance:

Just a few months ago, it was announced with a great deal of noise that professor of journalism will be recognized as a detrimental job and the retirement age for journalists will be reduced. The journalists were overjoyed and expressed their gratitude to the officials, especially the honorable minister of labor and social affairs. Later, this proposal was vetoed and was forgotten. But did you read a line of criticism or objection in the newspapers?

Still another case:

A few years ago, the directors of the press, who I think were called the directors of the press cooperative, gave the good news that all journalists (including the holders of newspaper licenses to the reporters, passes, and bag carriers) will become homeowners. It is reported that some people sold their carpets, pots, and pans, and even their engagement rings and gave the money to the press directors to become homeowners in the city of Hashtgerd. But neither did they become homeowners nor did they say a word, whereas each had bought and sold coins or dollars with the few thousand tumans, and then they had bought and sold again and were now among the imperialists who have no pain.

Have you heard or read anywhere of one of these journalists who had lost his property saying or writing one word in protest?

Well, when the journalists are so generous in regard to affairs that relate to themselves and forgive and forget the problems, how could you fear putting one or two zeros after some numbers?

Some of the brother ministers complain about the shortage of budget and resources. They complain about the ingratitude of the critics and about their services and hard work being ignored. If these dear ones, instead of complaining about their fate, would take a look at their actions and examine their method of using statistics and figures in the organization under their own control, they will certainly revise their views.

If these dear ones even look at the numbers and figures and promises given in the Ministry of Post, Telegraph, and Telephone, they will confess that they themselves are at fault.

Just last year, early in Aban [late October], extensive publicity began regarding the distribution of telephones to Tehran citizens in the color and black and white newspapers and on radio and television. Of course, you remember? First, they started by announcing the new prefixes and continued until on 22 Azar [13 December] (which was the day for presenting the 1374 [21 March 1995-20 March 1996] budget to the Majles), they brought the publicity to its height. During those days, the main motto was (...and this is the actual attainment of the promise of distribution of one million new telephones in the most unprecedented development of the communication network of greater Tehran...) [as published].

Such publicity continued for a few weeks along with announcing the name of 14-15 telephone centers and the number of telephones which were supposed to be distributed at every center, making all the inhabitants happy.

I added up the figures that were claimed; they did not add up even to 450,000 numbers.

Now, if I ask, then, what happened to the remaining 550,000 telephones, what will I hear in answer? If they

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are kind enough, they will say, go and knock at the door of each and every house, store, company, and office and ask how many telephones we have distributed among them to realize that we have not said anything untrue.

Of course, this is when the gentlemen have not wished to use their skills of optimizing the presentation of statistics and figures. Otherwise, if they were to say, we did not distribute one million but two million telephones, what would I be able to do? Is it not true that recently the deputy director of the Communication Company said, "$1,029,000,000 has been invested in the National Communication Equipment Production Factory, and when this factory reaches operation, 92 percent of the needed goods in the communications industry will be produced domestically?"

Now, come and try to prove that 92 percent is an exaggeration and that the actual figure is something like only 91.89 percent. I personally do not have the courage to do it. If you do, be my guest!

In the statements of the deputy director of the Communications Company, there is a delicate psychological point that must be carefully noted. He says, "$1,029,000,000 was invested in the National Communication Equipment Production Factory...." Why did he say this figure and not 1,129,000,000 was invested?

Not everywhere should the figures be added to.... Sometimes by disregarding one figure (even $100 million), such a number must be presented that the reader will become certain that the speaker knows his calculations and is announcing the precise figure of investment as $1.029 billion and not even $10.3 billion. Hence, undoubtedly, we will actually produce 92 percent of the goods needed in the communication industry ourselves and have overtaken the Japanese, hip, hip, hurrah...hip, hip, hurrah.

Of course, I am guessing that there has been a bit of a misunderstanding between the deputy director of the Communications Company and the boss of his boss; that is, brother Engineer Gharazi, because the honorable deputy director has presented the figures without consulting with the high-ranking officials of the ministry and has said "92 percent of the goods needed by the communications industry will be produced domestically," not realizing that the high official of the ministry had it in his heart to give a discount of 12 percent and announce a few months later in Gonbad that "80 percent of the industrial equipment of the communications in the country will be produced domestically."

Now, as to why the deputy director of communication had already spoken contrary to what the minister had not yet said, I am not able to figure out either. In any case, let us leave this issue aside and go back to the main issue, which is the optimizing of the method of numbers and statistics.

Another kind of skill in presenting figures is that we mention some of the figures in dollars or marks and some in tumans and a number in rials [R]. For example, see what skill the Social Security Organization has displayed in this connection:

"The reserves of the Social Security Organization are 260 billion tumans, whereas the payments of the organization last year (1372), including the health services costs, have been estimated at more than R1.084 billion."

Now, place this kind of statistical announcement against this report:

"The production of iron ore in the Chaghart Mine will be doubled."

The irresponsible official who had written and announced this report has already downgraded one of the brilliant future successes of the Ministry of Mines and Metals. Dear brother, did it never occur to you to give the report to the press as follows, "The production of iron ore in the Chaghart Mine will increase by 100 percent"?

Even our beloved minister of industries presents the figures in such a way that their greatness is not understood. Instead of saying that "the capacity of concentrate production has increased by 2,000 percent," he says, "the capacity of concentrate production has increased by 20 times."

Of course, sometimes rays of genius are seen in the presentation of statistics and figures by some of the responsible brothers. For example, our dear ones in the Ministry of Petroleum, in explaining the increase in the price of petroleum products, say that a gallon of gasoline in the United States costs 99 cents and in Iran, 10 tumans per liter.

Such reasoning naturally calms your mind, because if we figure the dollar to be 300 tumans, every gallon of gasoline is R2,970, when at the present we pay only 10 tumans per liter.

The wages of a German worker are a mere DM154, whereas even our unskilled construction worker gets at least R20,000. A German pays DM5.14 for a kg of meat, which is something like R12,000 at our official rates, whereas our simple worker can buy beef at 1,200 tumans per kg.

I think that I have provided enough reasons and evidence to prove that we do not have the skills in optimizing the numbers and figures of an ordinary man like

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Bohlul, in whose time neither were there any advanced industries to produce canary yellow dye nor any computers.

Of course, alongside optimizing the use of figures and statistics should be placed an art called the "art of promises," used in order to make all the people quite happy. But, because my ration of pages in this issue of the monthly journal has run out, I will leave discussing this art to future issues.

I wrote coupon, which reminded me that I have not used Urban Coupon No. 116 to get imported frozen meat.

Honorable reader, do you know where this kind of meat can be procured? If you do, please let me know, and do not let my family be deprived of this great blessing.

Iran: Legal Services Bureau Answers Deputy on Airbus Settlement

LD0406122296 Tehran KEYHAN in Persian 30 May 96 p 3

[Unattributed report: "President Hashemi-Rafsanjani's Legal Services Department Responds to Movahhedi-Savoji's Letter"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Political Desk: The Bureau of International Legal Services of the Islamic Republic of Iran has sent a reply to KAYHAN on the legal settlement reached between Iran and America concerning the case of the downing of the [Iranian] Airbus.

According to our correspondent, the letter of the Bureau of International Legal Services says: Concerning the relevance of Article 139 of the Constitution, the matter was raised and debated at a session of the esteemed Guardian Council simultaneous with the beginning of discussions and before the signing of an agreement in this regard. Because of the amount which was to be received as compensation for the aircraft which was brought down and the compensation for the families of the martyrs, the Guardian Council did not consider the settlement case applicable to Article 139 of the Constitution; therefore, there was no need to obtain the permission of the Islamic Consultative Majles.

In its reply, the Bureau of International Legal Services stresses: It is not correct to say that the Majles and people were not aware of the nature of the settlement, because more than two months before the signing of the relevant agreements the speaker of the Islamic Consultative Majles and and other esteemed officials, including the head of the judiciary, were informed of the contents of the agreements through a detailed report sent to them (reference no: 200-11724 dated 27-9-74). If the esteemed Majles had an opinion, or thought that permission should have been obtained based on Article 139 of the Constitution, then it could have said so at the time and before the signing of the agreements. But the Majles did not say anything, and, therefore, action was taken for the signing and the implementation of the agreement, and the relevant sums have also been paid out. [passage omitted]

Iran: Burglaries Cause Concern in Khozestan Province

LD0306204296 Tehran RESALAT in Persian 30 May 96 p 17

[From the "Comment of the Day" column by Ahvaz correspondent: "Seek a Solution to the Avhaz Burglary Problem"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Repeated burglaries in Khozestan, especially in the city of Ahvaz, have caused concern to the people and they are worried about it.

The side effects of the burglaries are that the people don't visit each other as part of their tradition, they lock their vehicles inside their houses, and they even lock their bedroom doors.

There have been several cases of burglary involving vehicles and houses every day in Ahvaz, which does not suit the image of the city.

The most recent major case of burglary happened when carpets were stolen from a carpet merchant in the Martyr's Square, the most central part of the city, in the early hours of the day. The interesting fact is that in the same area, there were dozens of law-enforcement personnel patrolling and maintaining [the security of] the city.

It is, therefore, necessary that a solution be sought, either by the minister of interior, who is in charge of the country's high security council and who said recently that a solution must be sought for the burglary problem; by the governor of Khozestan who considers Khozestan as one of the few secure provices in the country; and also by the law-enforcement forces of Khozestan, to make people feel secure.

Pakistan

Pakistan: UN Urged To Probe Delhi Rights Abuses in Kashmir Polls

BK0506083496 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Overseas Service in English 0800 GMT 5 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Pakistan has asked the United Nations to use its mechanism to look into the instances of gross and consistent violations of human rights by the Indian authorities in the name of so-called elections

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in the internationally recognized disputed territory of Kashmir.

In a letter to the Secretary General, Mr. Butrus Ghali, Pakistan's permanent representative to the UN, Mr. Ahmad Kamal, warned that India might try to stage yet another electoral farce in the so-called state elections. He said such elections would be used by India to further escalate its repression in the occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

Mr. Ahmad Kamal reiterated Pakistan's support to Mr. Butrus Ghali's offer of good offices for the resolution of Kashmir dispute. He urged the Secretary General to use his influence to persuade India to withdraw its forces from the held territory halting its repression of civilian population and agree to a dialogue on Kashmir issue.

Pakistan: PRC Bans Pakistanis' Entry; Diplomat Details Visa Policy

BK0506004196 Islamabad THE NATION in English 4 Jun 96 pp 1,5

[Report by THE NATION reporter]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] ISLAMABAD - The People's Republic of China has banned the entry of those Pakistanis who illegally enter Xinjiang province for falcon hunting and those who indulge in smuggling.

A senior Chinese diplomat told THE NATION in an interview that these persons did not possess any valid document or any other paper which could justify their presence in their country. He said several Pakistani smugglers were arrested in Beijing who are detained in the jails. One of them has been beheaded also, he said. He denied that China has imposed any ban on issuance of visas to Pakistani travelers who go there for sight-seeing. In order to check such illegal entrants the embassy has taken certain steps to restrict the visas. Explaining China's visa policy the diplomat said, after the arrest of smugglers and other illegal entrants in China, that no individual will be issued visas. Instead only groups which have sponsors by legally established tourism organizations of both the countries will obtain visas. He stated that some Pakistani nationals tried to get visas on fake documents and passports which were still in their possession. The diplomat evaded a question whether those arrested in his country were indulging in illegal and unlawful activities. He said according to the Chinese law anybody who has valid documents can obtain visas. In this connection he stated that during the last few years the embassy in Pakistan issued 15,000 visas every year. This liberal policy unfortunately had to be changed after the arrest of some Pakistanis in Xinjiang province. He said in 1967 Pakistan and China had done away with issuance of visas but the facility was misused by certain unscrupulous elements which forced his country to reimpose restrictions.

The Chinese diplomat said there was very simple procedure for obtaining visas from the embassy. Visa-papers were deposited with the visas officials one day and if the documents were found genuine and correct, visa is issued the very next day.

He also said if some Pakistani businessmen and industrialists were invited by the Chinese government or a company, they were issued visas without delay. The Chinese diplomat said China and Pakistan had very good relations. They were celebrating 45th anniversary of their friendship. Pakistan had played dominant role in bringing China and America close, he added. He stated that there was a weekly flight between Islamabad and Oramchi and twice a week direct flights of Chinese airlines between Karachi and Beijing.

Pakistan: Defense Minister Calls on South Korean Prime Minister

BK0406020396 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 3 Jun 96 p 12

[APP Report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] RAWALPINDI: Federal Minister for Defense Aftab Shaban Mirani called on Prime Minister Su-Sung Yi at his office in Seoul on Saturday, [1 June] according to a message received here Sunday.

Mirani, on a five-day visit to the Republic of Korea, discussed the security environment in South Asia and the Korean Peninsula. The defense minister briefed the prime minister on the situation in the Indian held Kashmir.

Prime Minister Yi said his government was eagerly looking forward to receive Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto next month.

Mirani thanked Premier Yi for the warm hospitality extended to him during his on-going visit.

Major General Jamshed Malik, additional secretary Ministry of Defence, and Pakistan Ambassador to South Korea Javid Hussain accompanied Mirani in the meeting.

Earlier, Mirani visited the South Korean Heavy Industries in Chaggwon area and witnessed the defense related equipment being produced by Hyundai and Daewoo heavy industries. Mirani and his wife along with his South Korean counterpart Yi Yang-ho and his wife attended a dinner hosted by ambassador Javid Hussain.

Mirani also visited Panmoonjum, the other day, located in the demilitarized zone between the border of South

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and North Korea. He was briefed about the activities of the United Nations command in the joint security area.

Pakistan: Asif—Government Rejected Secret Talks With India, Israel

BK0306160996 Islamabad THE NATION in English 3 Jun 96 pp 1,5

[NNI Report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] ISLAMABAD - A lengthy meeting of the troika comprising President Sardar Farooq Ahmed Khan Leghari, Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and Chief of Army Staff Gen. Jehangir Karamat was held at the Aiwan-i-Sadr here on Sunday [2 June] which lasted for several hours.

The meeting's deliberations focused on the security situation at the borders, law and order situation in the country, elections in occupied Kashmir, the changing political landscape in India and Afghanistan and other issues.

According to resources, the Prime Minister gave a briefing on the law and order situation in the country and the government's measures taken to halt the recent spate of bomb blasts. The situation was now under control, she informed. The meeting discussed the elections in occupied Kashmir and rejected the forced voting at gunpoint and termed the electoral exercise as farce. Pakistan's principled stand to continue diplomatic and moral support of the legitimate struggle of the Kashmiris was reiterated.

While discussing Afghanistan, the meeting pledged to continue Pakistan's policy of non-interference in Afghanistan's internal affairs and to extend unconditional support to Afghanistan for establishment of peace and re-construction.

The meeting also took up the reported statement of new Indian Prime Minister Deve Gowda that he wanted good Pakistan-India ties. Pakistan's stand was reiterated that Pak-India ties should be based on equality and the Kashmir issue should be solved on the basis of UN resolutions.

The COAS [Chief of Army Staff] briefed the President and the Prime Minister on the needs of the armed forces besides apprising them of the outcome of his recently concluded visit to Turkey.

Meanwhile, Foreign Minister Asif Ahmed Ali has revealed that India had offered secret talks to Pakistan on the Kashmir and nuclear issues. Talking to a group of reporters here on Sunday he, however, said that Pakistan turned down the offer saying that no compromise was possible on these issues and besides it did not believe in secret talks. He also revealed that the Israel too has contacted Pakistan for similar secret talks on important bilateral issues but Pakistan gave a similar response to Tel Aviv, he added.

About the new United Front government of Deve Gowda in India, he said it will be a weak government and Pakistan was not pinning any hopes on it. He said it is expected that the new Indian rulers will be forced to toe the Congress line to keep its vital support intact and therefore no new ground is expected to be broken on contentions Indo-Pak issues. However, he said, Pakistan wants a resolution of these issues and its offer of dialogue on them to India still stands.

Asif said the Indian general elections were exemplary and well-conducted with the exception of the farce in Kashmir. He said forced voting at gunpoint has only exacerbated on already complex issue further. He said Pakistan's stand had proved right that plebiscite, not elections was the solution of the festering Kashmir problem. He said the election farce in Kashmir had isolated India globally. He said the outgoing failed BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] government had extremist stands on a variety of issues that concerned Pakistan like Kashmir, nuclear and Indian Muslims issues. The new government in contrast, he said, is expected to follow more or less the same policies as those of the Rao government.

Answering a question about the National Kashmir Committee meeting chaired by Nasrullah Khan, he said it was a constructive meeting and some drawbacks in our Kashmir policies were discussed which would be rectified to make them more effective.

Pakistan: UN Asked To Reject Kashmir Polls, Note India's Threats

BK0306113396 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1100 GMT 3 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The chairman, Parliamentary Kashmir Committee, Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan, has asked the United Nations to reject the fraudulent elections held at gun point in occupied Kashmir and take notice of India's threats to Pakistan. Addressing a news conference in Islamabad today, he said the world body should take steps to implement the Security Council resolutions on Kashmir as these are still effective and not outdated as claimed by India. He also called upon the democratic countries of the world not to be hoodwinked by the Indian propaganda about the farcical elections in occupied Kashmir. Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan suggested that an emergency meeting of the OIC [Organization of Islamic Conference] Contact Group should be called to consider the latest situation in occupied

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Kashmir and the Indian designs against Kashmiri people and Pakistan. The chairman, Parliamentary Kashmir Committee emphasized the need for national consensus on Kashmir cause and all other issues confronting the nation to foil the nefarious designs of the enemies of Pakistan. He said the present government has given top priority to the Kashmir issue and would be sending missions soon to various countries to apprise them about Indian atrocities against Kashmiri people.

Pakistan: Changes Possible in Punjab To Counter Indian 'Designs'

BK0306160296 Islamabad PAKISTAN in Urdu 3 Jun 96 pp 1,5

[Report by Shakil Anjum]

[FBIS Translated Text] A decision has been taken to remove the governor of Punjab, Raja Saroop Khan, from office. This was decided at a high-level meeting held in the Presidency on Sunday [2 June]. This decision is likely to be implemented within the next few days. According to reliable government sources, Pakistan's ambassador to Germany, Lt. General (retired) Asad Durrani, will replace him. According to the sources, he is reportedly being removed because of his poor health, but actually the government wants to adopt a new strategy against the designs of the Indian secret agency — Research and Analysis Wing.

According to these sources India has now made Punjab its target, it is no longer Karachi. General Assad Durrani, former chief of the Inter Services Intelligence and Military Intelligence, is well aware of the Indian secret agency network. These sources say that other important changes are likely in the province of Punjab and that General Farrukh and General Naseer are also likely to be given important assignments.

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka: Kumaratunga Greets New Indian Prime Minister

BK0406123896 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 4 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sri Lanka is confident that all aspects of her relations will advance with renewed vigor under the leadership of the new Indian prime minister, H.D. Deve Gowda. In a message of felicitations, President Chandrika Kumaratunga said that traditional ties between the two countries have endured for centuries and relations between the people have been particularly close. As countries which have been deeply committed to democracy, pluralism, and nonalignment since independence, India and Sri Lanka have much in common. The president said that these bonds have been further strengthened through collective endeavors within SAARC [South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation]. Mrs. Kumaratunga has extended the sincere good wishes of the government and the people of Sri Lanka to the new Indian prime minister.

In another message, Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar has recalled [the] understanding and maintenance of good relations between India and Sri Lanka. Addressed to his counterpart, I.K. Gujral, he said that India-Sri Lanka relations have steadily matured to the mutual benefit of the people in the two countries. Mr. Kadirgamar said he looks forward with pleasure and confidence to a period of notable tranquility and great fruitfulness in the relations between India and Sri Lanka with Gujral at the helm of external affairs in India.

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